

*Sunset*

**WESTERN**

**RANCH HOUSES**



# **Sunset**

## **WESTERN**

### **RANCH HOUSES**

You expect the house you build to do many things for you. Not only should it give you greater comfort with less work, but it must also give you a more satisfying way of living.

Sunset Western Ranch Houses typify today's demand for convenient, comfortable living! Straightforward design, economical, practical welding of indoor and outdoor living areas function to make the Western ranch house spacious or cozy as the home owner may require.

No other home design is so adaptable to today's varied construction materials and to the use of prefabricated units. The Western ranch house can grow from a simple, liveable home unit to one that is gracious and spacious.

It was of these ranch houses that Henry H. Saylor, editor of *The American Architect*, wrote, as long ago as 1925, in an article reviewing 15 years of home building on the Pacific Coast . . . "There was still another type that stood out from the medley of jumbled styles, or mere affectations, and that was the California ranch house. It never put forth any great claims of merit, it never really entered the lists to establish itself as the vogue. Apparently it just grew, naturally, inevitably, a logical result of meeting definite needs in the most direct, workmanlike manner possible with the materials at hand."

The form called a ranch house has many roots. Some feed directly on the Spanish period. Some draw upon the pioneer years. It has never known a set style. It was shaped for a special way of living—Western, informal, yet gracious.

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Jim Draeger







*Sunset*

Western Ranch Houses



Small

Western Ranch House



# *Sunset* Western Ranch Houses

*By*

THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF SUNSET MAGAZINE

*in collaboration with* CLIFF MAY

LANE PUBLISHING CO.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



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*Sunset*

Western Ranch Houses







# What is a ranch house?

In your mind, you may have a clear picture of the ranch house you would like to build.

Architecturally, however, no such clarity exists.

Today, almost any house that provides for an informal type of living and is not definitely marked by unmistakable style symbols is called a *ranch house*.

The fact that there is no definite form labeled *ranch house* should not disturb the prospective builder. He can go ahead and build according to the way he wants to live, without fear of violating any rules.

This study of the ranch house is not an attempt to establish a definition of an architectural form. The purpose of this book is to explore the many ways in which the ranch-house type of living has prevailed in Western homes in the past, and how it may be built into them now.

Most of us describe any one-story house with a low, close-to-the-ground silhouette as a ranch house. When a long, wide porch is added to this form, almost everyone accepts the name. And when wings are added and the house seems to ramble all over the site, the name is established beyond dispute.

Of course, the misuse of the name is of no moment if what you build or buy as a *ranch house* turns out to be livable and satisfying. The real crime against the ranch house lies not in the failure to reproduce its historic appearance or characteristics, but in the failure to take advantage of what it has to offer as a way of living. A house can look like a ranch house and not serve as a ranch house.

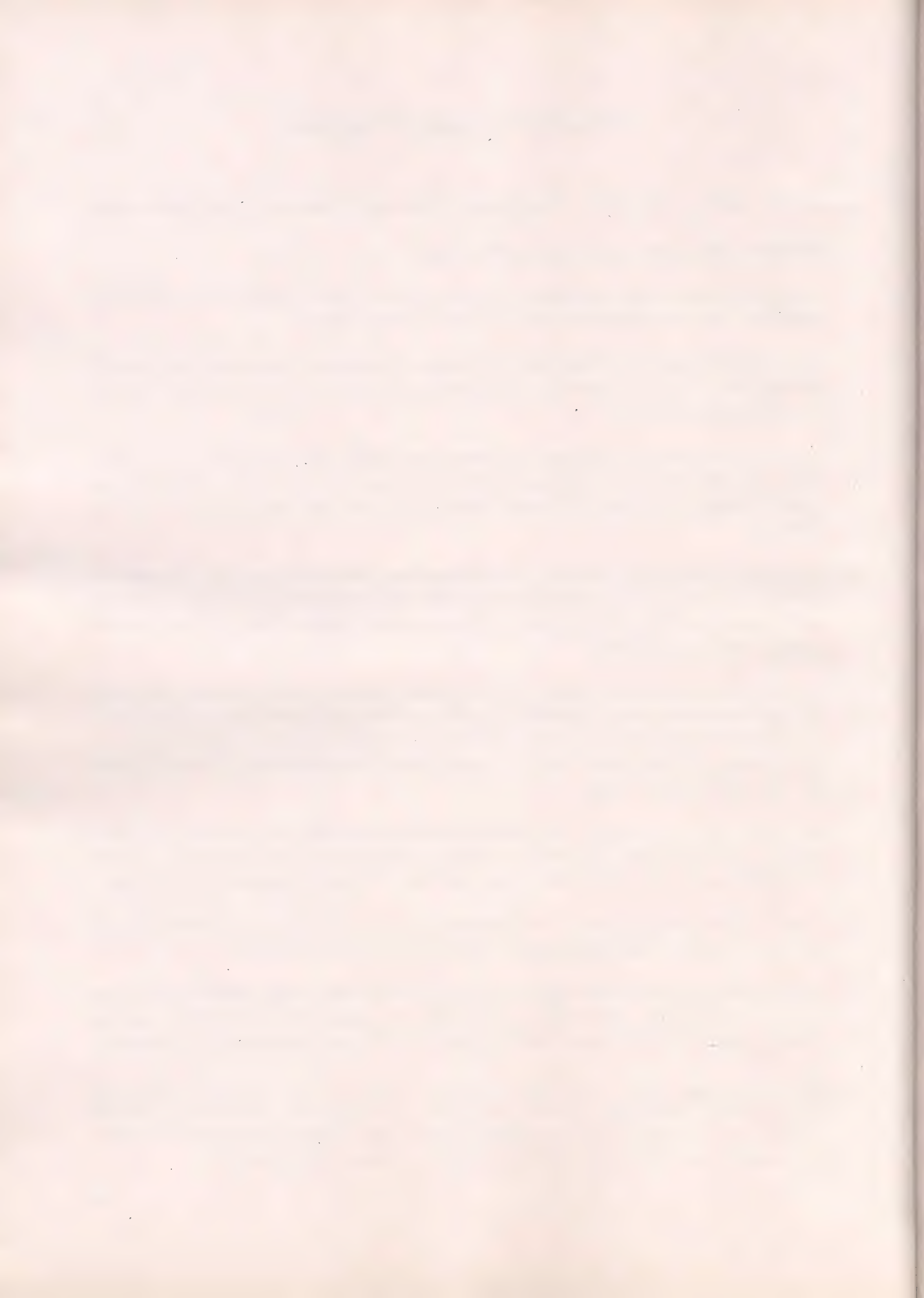
The close-to-the-ground look of a ranch house is of secondary importance to its being actually on ground level. The ability to move in and out of your house freely, without the hindrance of steps, is one of the things that makes living in it pleasant and informal.

The eye appeal of the house that rambles around the site means little if the protected, outdoor areas created by the ramblings are not accessible from the house.

Wide, protected porches immediately suggest outdoor living — lazy summer afternoons, informal entertaining — but if those porches face the street and are, therefore, without privacy, you merely have a house that *looks* like a ranch house but does not function as one.

The form called a ranch house has many roots. They go deep into the Western soil. Some feed directly on the Spanish period. Some draw upon the pioneer years. But the ranch-house growth has never been limited to its roots. It has never known a set style. It was shaped by needs for a special way of living—informal, yet gracious.







## History of the ranch house

**T**HE HISTORY of the Western ranch house is the personal history of many families—those of the soldier of Spain, the Spanish Don, the Mexican politician, the deserter from a British brig-of-war, the merchant from Boston, the fur trader, the American soldier, the adventurer, the pioneer. Each brought to the West his own mental blueprint of a home; each had his influence on the development of the Western architectural pattern.

Those blueprints were not followed to the letter. The Western sun and the Western terrain stimulated some changes in them. The availability of a few building materials and the lack of others with which to build undoubtedly simplified many former complex designs. But the greatest and most lasting influence on the blueprints brought into California was the way of living developed by the Spanish colonists. A few hundred people found themselves separated from the rest of the world in a new and gentle place. Almost immediately they established a pattern of living to fit that place. It is easy to

understand the willingness with which the first Americans allowed Spanish California to have its way with them when you read historian Hubert Howe Bancroft's appraisal of its people: "The Californian ever aspires to gallantry . . . They had received but little training, scarcely any education, yet they possessed virtues worthy of record. They were kind-hearted and liberal; a person could travel from San Diego to Sonoma without a coin in his pocket, and never want for a roof to cover him, a bed to sleep on, food to eat, and even tobacco to smoke . . . Any stranger traveling through the country could stop at any one of the missions as long as he pleased. When ready to leave, all he had to do was tell the padres, and his horses would be ready, with a guide, and also provisions for the road; generally a chicken or two, a boiled tongue, a loaf of bread, boiled eggs, a bottle of wine, a bottle of brandy; and the traveler was at no expense whatever . . .

"One who has become rich by his industry is neither admired nor envied by anyone. Theft is



*Of all the houses Machado built in San Diego (1830-35) this was the first to have a shingle roof,*





*In 1827, Señor Estudillo may have worried about the shed roof's being too modern for those times*

extremely rare. They do not like work, but are all day in the saddle, looking after their herds and hunting . . . Reverence and respect for father and mother were carried to the highest degree . . .

"Absolutely unconfined socially and politically . . . ; master of all their eyes surveyed, the beautiful earth and its fruits as free as its sweet air and sunshine, lands unlimited, cattle on a thousand hills, with ready-made servants to tend them; born here, basking here, with none to molest or make afraid; with woman to love, and offspring to rear, and priest to thrive; with heart full and stomach full; how could they be else than happy, than lovers of home and country?"

Bancroft is talking about a mere handful of men. California's white population was but 600 in 1780, 1200 in 1800, less than 3300 in 1820. We should be able to see what effect this California life had on home building by picking up the history of three or four typical families.

In the personal histories of all families, today or 100 years ago, lie the clues to the understanding of their houses. The house you build tomorrow may be influenced by memories of your grandfather's house, your present position or the position you are seeking, your circle of friends, your visit to Williamsburg, Virginia, or to Gua-

temala, or to the latest model house, the magazines you read, your new son-in-law, or daughter-in-law, your health, your education . . .

The houses built 100 years ago were influenced by the same forces in the private lives of their builders. So let's look at a scattering of names and dates in California history and, with a few illustrations of the houses that were built, try to check the clues that reveal influences on the design of those original Western houses.

To trace the influence of our builders, it is necessary to watch dates rather closely. It is obvious that a house built in 1840 had no influence on one built in 1826. So let's look at California home builders in the years 1820 to 1840. In the 1830's there was a minor building boom under way in San Diego. The Mexican government had decided to abandon the old Spanish Presidio and give San Diego, which had been under military rule for some 60 years, a civil form of government. To encourage colonization, the Mexican congress had empowered the governors of the territories to grant vacant lands to individuals, families, and contractors. The soldiers of the Presidio, enjoying preferential treatment, were granted parcels of land of their choice.

José Manuel Machado, a corporal and a solid citizen, had brought up four daughters and



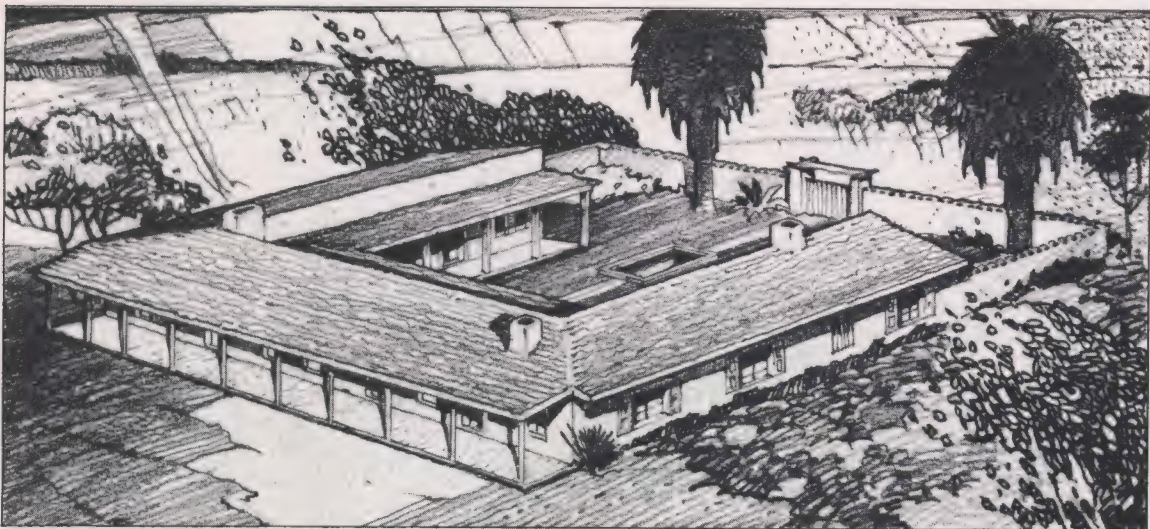


*The adobe walls were more than 30 inches thick in José Antonio Estudillo's house, San Diego*

married them off successfully. Obtaining a sizeable piece of land in town, he decided to build five houses for himself and his daughters.

A number of things influenced the pattern of Machado's building. He had watched several

mansions under construction. The Carillo adobe was begun in 1810, the Estudillo adobe and Bandinini adobe were built in 1826, the Lopez and Cota adobes were about to get under way. One of Machado's daughters had married John C. Stewart, a shipmate of Richard Henry Dana



*One of the largest adobes in old San Diego. It was built by José Antonio Aguirre (1825-30)*





*In 1833, just above San Diego's South Harbor, Santiago Arguello built this 14-room adobe house*

(*Two Years Before the Mast*). Machado and his daughters must have been guests at the remarkable double wedding party that started in the Carillo home in San Diego and ended in Monterey. Such was the popularity of the brides, Ramona Carillo and Luisa Arguello, that nearly all of San Diego closed shop and joined the wedding party on its long journey.

(*Clues: When you see a name like John C. Stewart dropped into a Spanish family, you know that some Yankee ideas will be at work soon.*

*Note that Luisa Arguello's wedding was a big event in California. When we see mothers of today insisting that their homes include a wide, winding stairway to provide the proper setting for a daughter's future wedding, it is easy to believe that Luisa's wedding in 1827 had something to do with the fact that her father, Santiago Arguello, chose to make his abode[see illustration] a home of 14 rooms.)*

About the same time that Machado was thinking about homes for his grown children, another old soldier, Luis Peralta, stationed at San Jose, completed his home on a ranch that was to secure the future of his five sons and daughters.

Peralta, travelling with the Anza expedition, arrived in San Francisco in 1776. By 1820, he looked back over 40 years of military service, the work he had done to help in the establishment of the San Jose, Santa Cruz, and Santa

Clara missions, and at the size of his family, and decided to take advantage of the current land grant privileges for veterans.

He had watched great herds of cattle and flocks of sheep grow from hundreds to thousands around the Mission San Jose. He liked the land across the bay from San Francisco.

In August of 1820, Sergeant Peralta, his sons, Domingo and Antonio, and close friends, rode



*Porch detail "modernized" Las Flores rancho*



north five leagues from San Leandro Creek to El Cerrito Creek. Here he turned to Martinez, the governor's representative in the party, and said, "Unto this point, Señor, I wish possession."

And so veteran Peralta claimed as his compensation a rancho within whose boundaries lie today the cities of Albany, Berkeley, Piedmont, Emeryville, Oakland, Alameda, and a part of San Leandro. "On his vast acres there were no fences and no roads; only divergent trails twisted through the wild oats which stretched like a vast sea on all sides. Here and there the tract was dotted by islands of huge trees. Numerous wild creatures made it their home, bears and coyotes and herds of deer and elk."

*(Clues: Luis Peralta was not a nobleman. He carried no visions of homes in Spain. He was born in Sonora, Mexico. The years he spent as commander of the guard at Mission San Jose gave him a working knowledge of the method of adobe construction taught the Indians by the mission fathers. Twenty-two years' service at the Presidio brought him many friends, such as the governor's representative, Martinez.*

*We could expect his house, therefore, to be the product of a variety of influences . . . the advice of Martinez, whose position carried him to all parts of California, building methods learned at the missions, desire to provide for the entertainment of cronies.)*

Between 1821 and 1840, the retired sergeant, Peralta, and his boys built several ranch houses

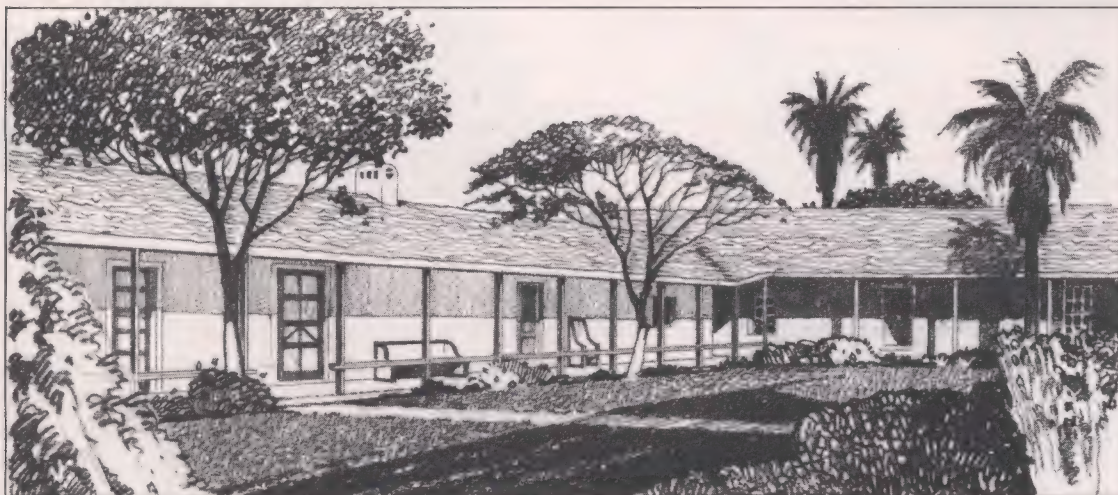
across the bay from San Francisco. In 1830, Machado, a retired corporal, started his five-house building project in the town of San Diego.

Between 1818 and 1826, José Antonio Julian de la Guerra y Noriega, comandante of the Presidio, built his mansion in Santa Barbara with the aid of Indian labor.

*(Clues: José Antonio was of noble descent. You would expect his home to include more refinements than the average. [See illustration.] )*

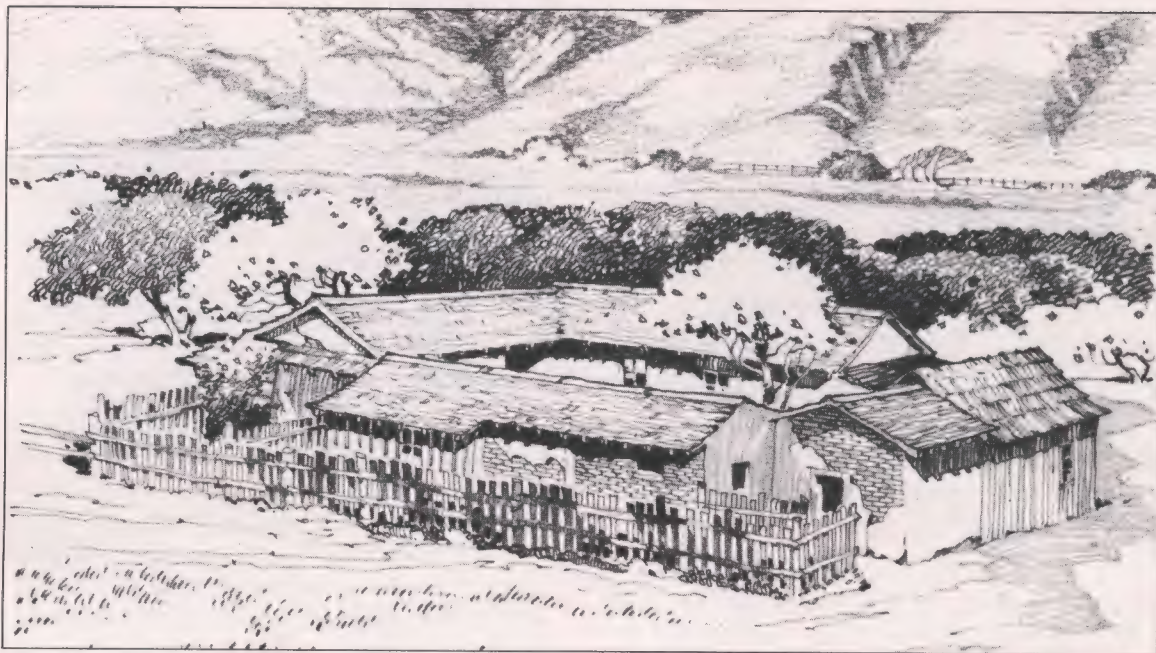
The houses these men built were strikingly similar. They were the town houses of the day and, architecturally, they showed their Spanish origin. Much the same plan was followed wherever the soldier of Spain built. Even as these homes were being constructed in San Diego, similar plans were being followed in Santa Fe. Davis, in his book, *El Gringo*, describes the houses there: "The almost universal style of building is in the form of a square with the courtyard in the center. A large door leads from the street into the patio or courtyard into which the doors of the various rooms open. A portal, or more properly, according to the American understanding of the name, a porch, runs around the court and serves as a sheltered communication between different parts of the house."

Another influence on the pattern of construction and plan of the first houses in California was the manner in which the pueblos were laid out. Those who took up land in the pueblos (San Jose, Sonoma, Los Angeles) did not live on a



*A porch, or corredor, was the hallway which connected all rooms of this house built before 1830*





*On the first private land grant in San Diego county, Francisco Alvarado built this house in 1824*

complete ranch or farm; they were allotted space in the town and given land that could be irrigated, and a larger amount of pasture land, some distance from their homes.

The instructions for laying out and founding a town were explicit. A pueblo grant was four square leagues of land, laid out in the form of a square or an oblong, according to the conditions of the country. The first point to be chosen was the plaza, which, in an inland town, had to be laid out in a rectangular form at the center of the town; or if the town were on a river or a bay, it was situated on the water front. At the center of the plaza was situated the pueblo courthouse, with a jail sometimes attached; and facing the plaza were the public buildings, the council house, the church, the store rooms, and others; while the remaining frontage was occupied by dwelling houses.

The Spanish law provided that each settler should receive a building lot 30 *varas* (a Spanish yard of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  inches) square, separated by streets of 10 *varas* in width between each block of two lots. However, there were variations in the sizes of the house lots. The lots of Los Angeles were 20 by 40 *varas*; and, by the Mexican ordinance of 1828 for the colonization of the Republic, each lot was to be 100 *varas* square.

Virtually all the homes built in the Spanish period (1769 to 1820) were of this "town house" type. They either clustered around the Presidios — Monterey, San Diego, Santa Barbara, or San Francisco — or were to be found in the pueblos of San Jose and Los Angeles, or in the vicinity of the missions throughout the area.

Almost all of the houses in this period were of one story, even in Monterey. As Richard Henry Dana, Jr., described the early houses of Monterey: "... the town lay directly before, making a very pretty appearance; its houses being of whitewashed adobe ... The red tiles, too, on the roof contrasted well with the white sides and the greenness of the lawn upon which the houses — about a hundred in number — were dotted about, here and there, irregularly ... This, as they are of one story, and of the cottage form, gives them a pretty effect when seen from a distance ..."

A great deal more than style symbols of the past or government regulations influenced these men in their building. The workmen in each case were Indians who had learned their trade in the building of the missions. (Mission architecture was not carried into home building, but the art of making and laying adobe brick was known throughout California.)



Whether the house was built in town or on a ranch, the enclosed patio had more than esthetic value. It shut out cattle, sheep, and deer. It gave protection from sun and wind.

The wide porch, too, was a necessity. It served both as the hall connecting the rooms of the house and as the outdoor living room.

The porch and patio are mentioned frequently in the letters and reports of guests in the California homes. Through the eyes of the romantic reporters, you see the porch and patio as a series of sets in a great "period" motion picture of Spanish-California life.

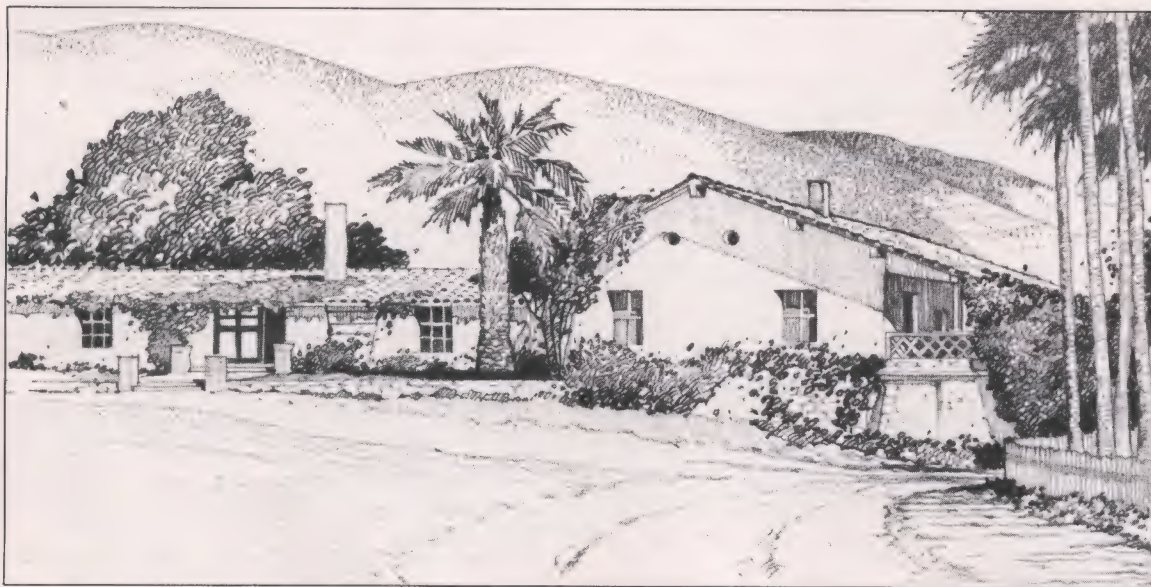
On one warm afternoon, the porch is a school for brides, where señoritas gossip over their sewing, take their naps, say their prayers. Or it's a ranch office where a booted and spurred ranchero and his hard-riding sons talk over plans for the rodeo. And then it's a nursery where Indian servants watch their wards toddle across the hard-packed floor of the patio, bathe them, rock them to sleep. On one morning, it is a court room where erring servants are judged and punishment is pronounced. On occasion, it is a council chamber where daughters are given in marriage and the settlement of the wedding portions is arranged.

But for the gayest and most colorful occasions, walk into the patio in early evening. Perhaps a

party is getting under way. Visitors are being received with casual ceremony. Small children are everywhere. An orchestra is being formed by guests, servants, and members of the family. There's a violin, guitar, flute. Roses and iris are in bloom, but they cannot compete with the silks and braid of the crowd. Soon everyone is around the long, candle-lit dining table and the sound effects in the darkening patio are of almost uninterrupted singing. To the tune of an old Spanish favorite, each person at the table is recognized by a made-up-at-the-moment verse. The pauses in the singing are filled with toasts to everybody and everything.

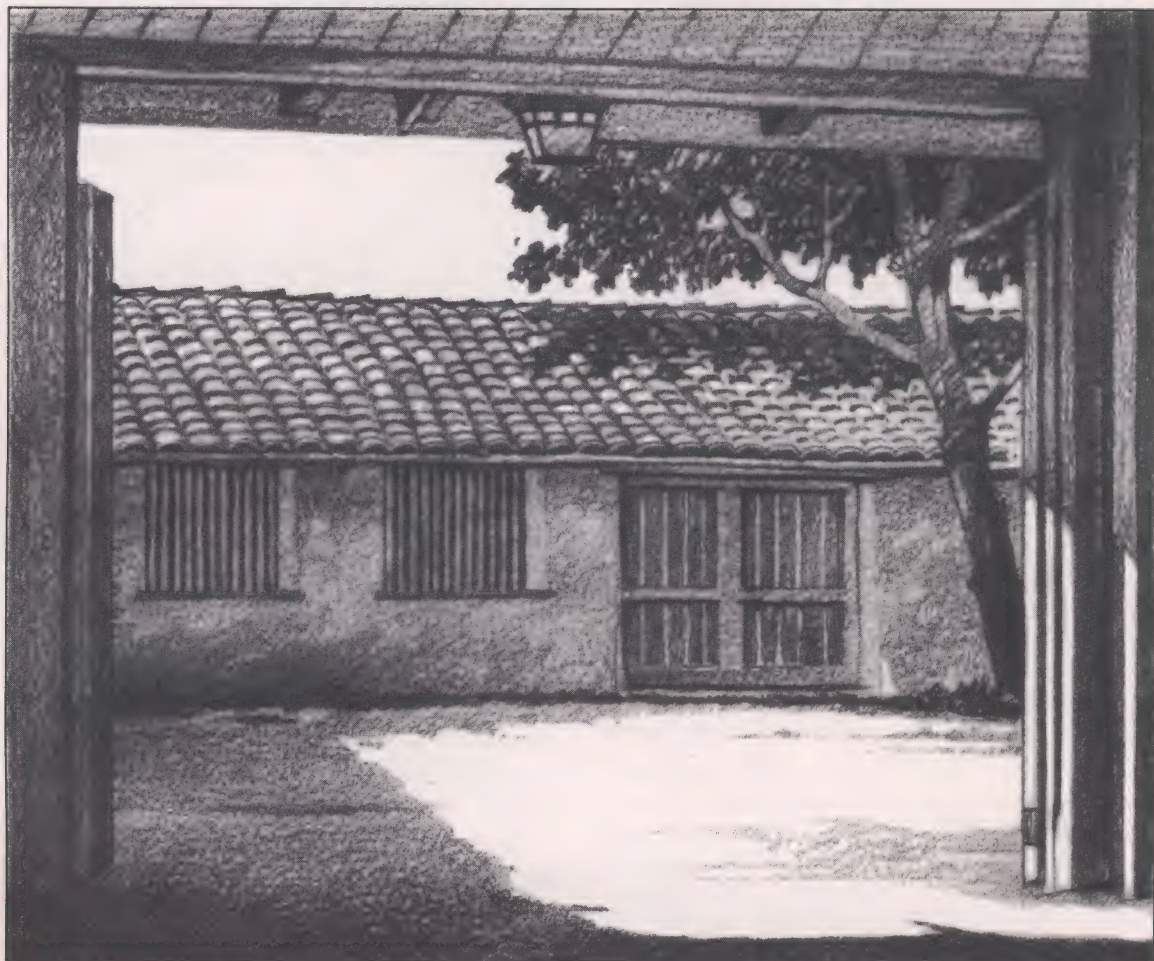
The life and work of the ranch gradually made changes in the town house. In the Peralta homestead, an adobe wall 8 feet high was built to enclose a 3-acre plot. Guest adobes were built within the enclosure. Much of the ranch work went on around the main dwelling and barns. Stables, blacksmith shops, corrals, ramadas, grape arbors, and sheds covering ovens near the kitchen were necessary. Some ranches were miniature towns, since the old-time rancho was seldom without its hundreds of servants.

The unlimited supply of land and cheap help made possible the spread-out plan of the old ranch house. A grape arbor used as an outdoor living room could be situated at any distance from the house without thought of the extra



*Original was built by San Luis Rey Mission, 1825; enlarged by later owners, Pio Pico and Foster*





*Gate in an adobe wall. Cave J. Coutts' 20-room house was built around a 114-by-120-foot patio*

work involved. The problem of upkeep and housework had no restraining influence on the size of the house or guest accommodations. Señora Vallejo directed a retinue made up of two servants for herself, five to grind corn for the tortillas, six or seven in the kitchen, six to wash the clothes of the children and servants, and nearly a dozen to attend to the sewing and the spinning.

Throughout the Spanish period, Monterey was the headquarters for both the social and economic life of the countryside. Naturally the town had a tremendous influence on home building throughout the territory, but if you give Monterey full credit for the creation of the two-story adobe, its influence was miraculous.

Houses of the "Monterey" type were built everywhere in California previous to the ap-

pearance of that type in Monterey itself. Don Bernardo Yorba's adobe on Rancho Santa Ana was built (in 1835) completely around a large patio; on two sides, the buildings were two stories high. The Bandini house was a one-story adobe in 1826, but a second story was added when the Seely family took it over. The house Vallejo built for his mother (in 1824), overlooking the Pajaro Valley, was a two-story structure, with the upper porch *completely enclosed in glass*.

The famous Larkin house was built by an American merchant who did not arrive in Monterey until 1832, several years after other two-story adobes were built.

The houses of the early West do not march along in neat, chronological order. And it is difficult to measure the exact influence exerted





*De la Guerra adobe, Santa Barbara (1818-26)*

by the many nationalities that visited or settled along the Western shore of this continent.

The first permanent houses in California were no more than 10 years old when new groups of men with new sets of mental blueprints descended upon the West.

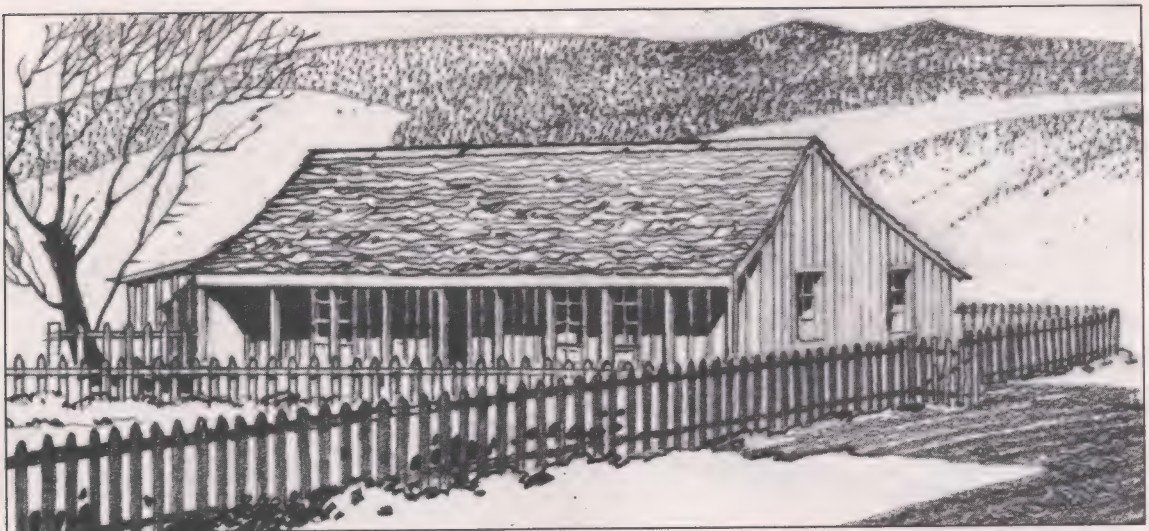
There were the pioneers: A small band of them found their way into the Sonoma district of



*Ranch foreman's adobe cottage of about 1835*

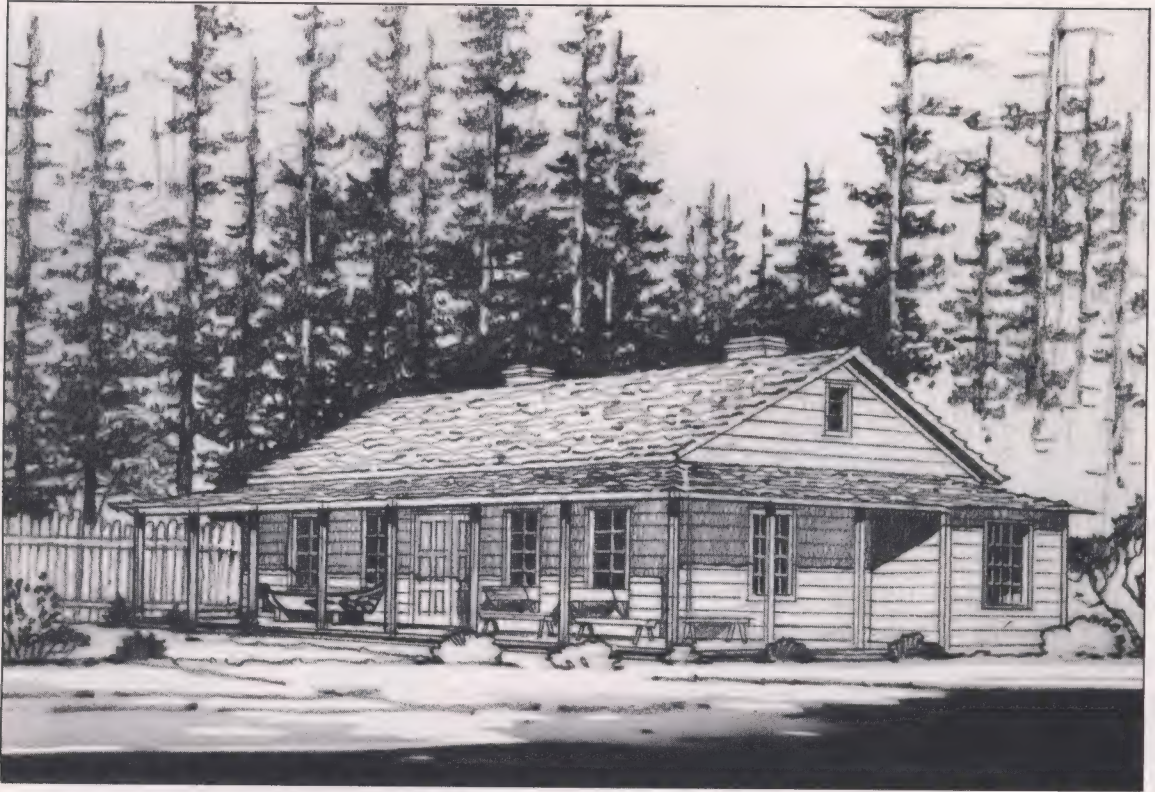
California in 1845. They built houses. M. D. Ritchie built a log house for his wife and five children. Reason Tucker built his house of split redwood. David Hudson built a temporary cabin of logs chinked with mud, but later he fashioned one of split redwood.

There were the fur traders: In 1843, Dr. John McLaughlin of the Hudson's Bay Company

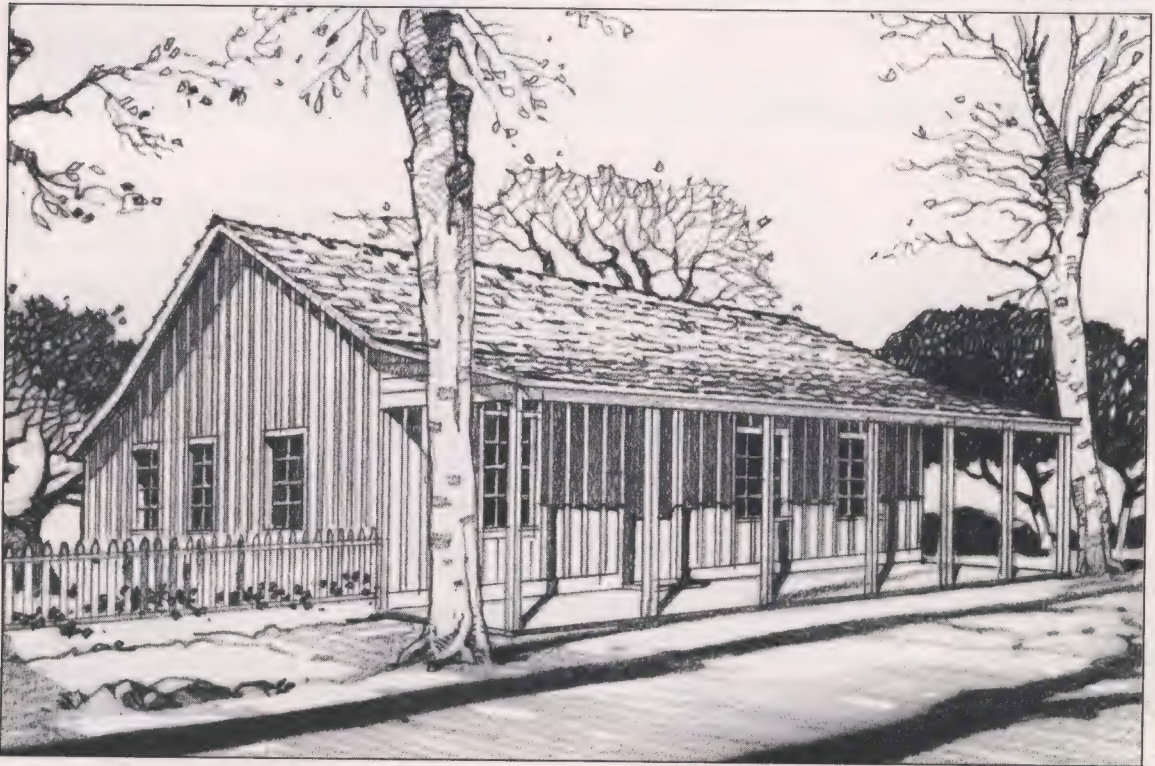


*Some of the weather-beaten old ranch adobes of the 1840's were covered by boards in the 1880's*





*Dr. John McLaughlin of Hudson's Bay Company built this house in 1843 at Ft. Nisqually, Wn.*



*The men who came to California for gold didn't have time to build intricately designed homes*



built the house illustrated here, for his factor at Ft. Nisqually, Washington. (Restored and converted into a museum, it may be seen in Point Defiance Park, Tacoma, Washington.)

There were the Forty-Niners. And, finally, the miscellaneous migration of men and women and children, seeking new and brighter worlds, swept along with the tide flowing West.

From the earliest houses built in the West, through all the styles that followed, the ranch houses we now choose as our inspirations are not of any one year or any one material. Yet strangely, they have much in common. We find a home in the Monterey Country that almost duplicates one in the Gold Country and yet any connection of design influence seems impossible. The houses that have stood the test of time, those that continue to appeal to us, are the simple houses, the honest houses that happened to be related in appearance because each was the logical solution to a common problem.

We think that it was these ranch houses that Henry H. Saylor, editor of *The American Architect*, was thinking about when, in 1925, he wrote this paragraph in an article reviewing 15 years of home building on the Pacific Coast.

"There was still another type that stood out from the medley of jumbled styles, lack of styles, or mere affectations, and that was the California ranch house. It never put forth any great claims of merit, it never really entered the lists to establish itself as the vogue. Apparently it just grew, naturally, inevitably, a logical result of meeting definite needs in the most direct, workmanlike manner possible with the materials at hand. It borrowed none of the finery of other architectural styles; it sounded no blatant note of self advertisement; it never, so far as I know, laid claim even to a name, and yet there it stands, a vernacular that is as unmistakably a part of its California foot-hills as the stone houses of eastern Pennsylvania betoken that great treasure store of mica schist. Unfortunately, there were few of these ranch houses compared with the multitude of suburban bungalows, and they were usually well off the beaten track where their quiet influence could have little effect on public taste."

The "public taste" is not always reflected in the houses and things used by the public. Most houses are not the result of the "taste" of the individual home builder. What is "being done" becomes fixed habit on the part of builders.



The early American and Spanish colonial houses were not far apart. Soberanes' house, Monterey





*Built by an English sailor turned druggist, doctor, 1835; later sold to French baker, Honore Escolle*

An individual home builder finds it difficult at any time to translate his mental pictures into wood or stone or brick. In attempting a translation, he uses the existing forms as examples and his dreams as modifiers. Such an approach

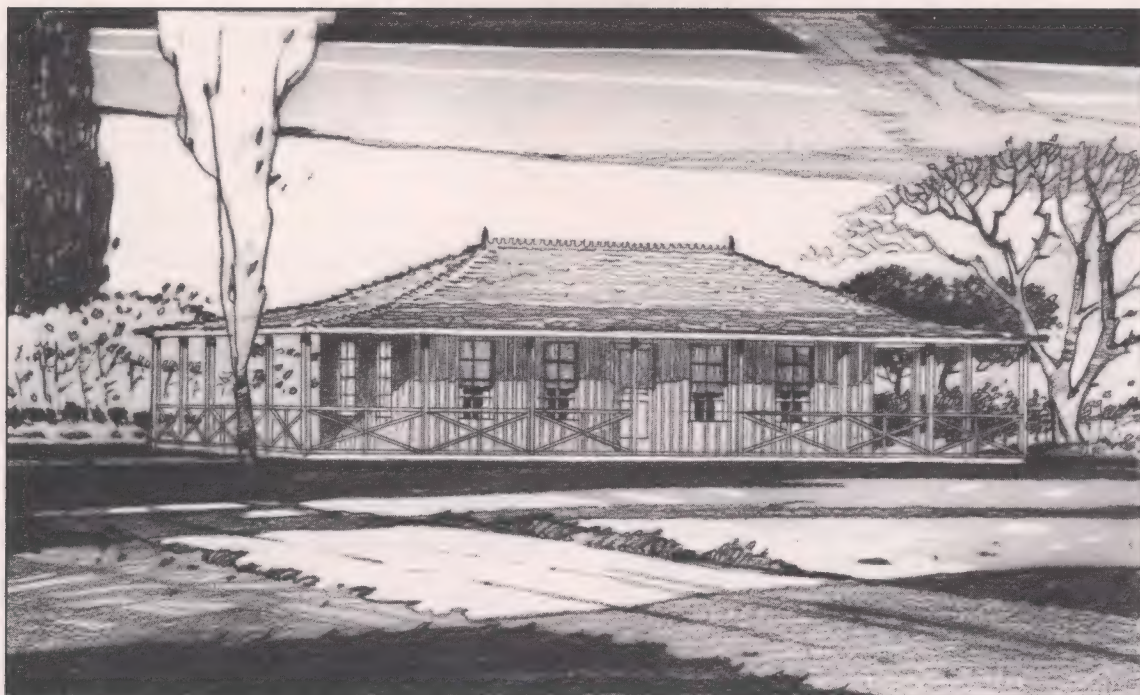
tends to perpetuate any trend and extend the life of any fad far beyond the time when the *public* still has respect for it.

The houses illustrated on these pages were built in answer to a need. That they had good design



*T. O. Larkin, Esq., of Boston, Mass., had his own original ideas when he built in Monterey in 1835*





*Many of these square cottages, the “emergency” houses of the 1860’s, are still lived in today*

qualities was due in part to the discipline brought about by the lack of materials and money and the discipline inherent in the carpenters who built them.

The ranch house was shaped by needs for a

special way of living — informal, yet gracious. It was kept simple by scarcity, both of materials and mechanical aids. It remained flexible under the stress of meeting infinite variety in terrain and climate.



*Unpretentious, as simple as the trees shading it, this house has survived a dozen style fads*



# What does ranch-house history mean to today's home builder?

Looking back at the old ranch houses should help you look ahead and see the real values in tomorrow's house. Looking back, you can see that there has been no *one* ranch house. There is no single fixed form to be copied. But the virtues of the ranch houses of the past have been built into the ranch houses of today as illustrated in plan, sketch, and photograph on the following pages.

Don't accept the ranch house for sentimental reasons. Analyze the examples to see how they fit the way you want to live.

If you could step forward 50 years and look back at the house you are now planning, what answer could you give to the question, "Why did I build that way?" If your answer could be, "I tried to get the most pleasant, comfortable living possible from the materials and money I had to work with," the chances are good that you would still be pleased with your effort. However, if the only reason for your choice was that you "wanted to put up a good front," or "that was the style that year," the results of

your building might not have withstood the test of time.

Houses of today must meet certain living requirements. They must give a feeling of spaciousness, privacy, indoor-outdoor living, etc. To assist you in your appraisal, the houses shown here have been grouped under the requirement they illustrate particularly well.

## *Ranch house gives privacy to living areas*

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## Planning livable space

You expect the house you build to do many things for you.

Not only should it give you greater comfort with less work, but it must also give you a more satisfying way of living. In short, you expect an emotional as well as a functional reward.

If, emotionally, you rebel at restraint, abhor fussiness, and in your heart are listening for the jingle of silver spurs to drown out the clank, clank of modern machines, you should call the house you build a *ranch house*. A ranch house, because of its name alone, borrows friendliness, simplicity, informality, and gaiety from the men and women who, in the past, found those pleasures in ranch-house living.

If you call it a ranch house, you'll probably live that way. But be careful that you don't use symbols — spurs and boots and saddles — as substitutes for the real living needs that make for ranch house living.

Planning a ranch house would be a simple job if we could look back over the houses of the past and point out the exact ways in which each house contributed to that "gracious, more satisfying way of living."

But when you analyze the living of the past you realize that the house itself was but a small part of the story. The out-of-doors invariably played the major role. Because of the out-of-doors, the house was very expandable. Living could spill out of the rooms onto the veranda and, if neces-



sary, into the patio, without losing connection with the house.

#### *Outdoor living is a big part of a ranch house*

It is impossible to consider a ranch house without thinking of the outdoor living areas connected with it.

When using the words "outdoor living," we have been mindful of the fact that there are many climates in the West and that every climate places its own particular set of limitations on outdoor living.

#### *Weather must be modified*

In forming your own definition of "outdoor living," don't make the mistake of assuming that you have but one choice: all or nothing. Rain in some sections of the West prompts local citizens to dismiss any thought of the problem with: "You can't have outdoor living here." Yet, in those same areas, you'll find roofed-over outdoor areas wherein many warm but showery spring and autumn days are converted into outdoor days. Wind in some California areas discourages many homeowners until a neighbor contrives a windbreak of glass or wood and really uses the out-of-doors.

The truth is that everywhere throughout the West, the out-of-doors must be modified in at least some way before it becomes livable. This recognition, that outdoor space is not universally and naturally delightful, has done a great

deal to promote better outdoor living facilities and arrangements.

We are becoming more thoughtful about the placement of the house on the lot so that protected outdoor areas will be created and the sun and wind will be under control.

Today, almost anyone building outdoor living rooms knows that windy locations can be made livable by protective fences, walls, and plantings; that areas receiving too much sun can be modified by shade trees, non-glaring surfaces, the use of water and cool colors throughout; that where there is too little sun, reflecting walls and pavements will at least trap what there is.

#### *Outdoor space makes indoor space seem larger*

Another reason for special emphasis on outdoor living is the beneficial effect it has upon life within the house itself. A terrace outside a living room extends the living beyond the walls of the house. Even when weather will not permit use of the outdoor area, it seems to make the inside room larger both visually and emotionally. A terrace connected with a living room is a wide avenue of escape, removing all feeling of being closed in.

#### *Plan indoor and outdoor space in one operation*

The weakness that recurs most often in today's outdoor living rooms is their relationship to the indoor living areas. This is not surprising when you consider that most of the outdoor living rooms have been built after the house was constructed. When you buy a house in which the living room conveniently looks across a nice little strip of lawn to a through street, the problem of relating indoor and outdoor living areas is not an easy one.

You have heard, of course, that the one way to avoid such mistakes is to combine into one operation the business of house planning and garden planning. The trouble with this pat advice is that it sounds too easy. Too often the planner thinks he has followed it when he locates a terrace near the back door.

#### *Plan your living*

If you would go out onto the lot you have bought and, with stake and string, mark out just





how you intend to use the entire area, you would be doing the kind of landscape planning we're talking about. In fact, if you divided the lot into sleeping space, living-entertaining space, and work-utility space, and then decided where the house walls should be placed to divide those areas for indoor and outdoor use, you would probably arrive at a most interesting and workable plan for both house and garden.

### *Space planning*

To show how *space planning* can increase the livability of your home, we have included plans of outdoor areas with each "floor plan" of the ranch houses presented in this book.

In order to emphasize method, each house plan was accepted as being that of a house to be

built. No comparison between plans as shown and existing plantings is intended.

You will note that details of plantings are omitted. We believe that omission of details and the unrestricted approach to each problem are necessary to bring out clearly the principles of such planning.

In planning for outdoor living, it is necessary to plan the outdoor rooms, their size and structure, before you decorate them. Just as foundation and walls determine the use of your house, so do fences, hedges, paving, ground-covers, etc., determine the use of your outdoor space. And once the basic framework, the structure, of your garden is established, the decoration with flowers and vines can be more easily and successfully accomplished.

## Landscaping the ranch house

When you accept the ranch house as the means to a way of life, your approach to landscaping cannot remain in the classic pattern. Ranch-house gardens are places to live in. They must be more than stage sets made up of flowers, vines, shrubs, and trees — stage sets wherein you and your friends are merely the audience. Ranch gardens must be usable, workable, livable. If stage sets give you pleasure, keep them under control so that they won't interfere with the use of the garden.

The gardens planned for the houses in this book are designed under the assumption that the gardens are to be lived in. Each plan attempts to do no more than establish the structure of the garden. In the landscape plans, the garden *rooms* are outlined in permanent lines. As in a plan for a house, the *floors* are indicated, a *frame* is established from which the garden cannot escape.

Also, as in planning a house, careful attention has been paid the relationship of the garden *rooms*. Garden spaces are related to the rooms of the house or to other garden areas. The livability of each is increased by planning connecting passageways that invite free movement.

In the following landscape plans, the design is

built up to the point of gardening. It gives you a framework into which you can plant your own personality and bring the colors and textures that will make the outdoor space your individual garden.

In plans where the permanent design structure dominates, the amount of color (and the amount of garden work) will be always as you like it. The lack of bloom, a vacation from gardening, do not destroy the basic beauty of the garden.

In a landscape scheme where planting and flowers form the structure, the garden is framed in indefinite and fleeting lines. It is always a garden you "should have seen a month ago." In extreme cases, such gardens are like living rooms filled with beautiful furniture — without space for a comfortable chair, and with only narrow paths winding through displays of furniture.

There is a contrast between the two garden schemes. But don't assume that one is the enemy and the other the friend of the color and fragrance of flowers. Actually, the plan with strong structural lines, with wide terraces, fences, and walls, gives you backgrounds against which flowers and vines can be dramatized. By organizing space, it allows relatively smaller

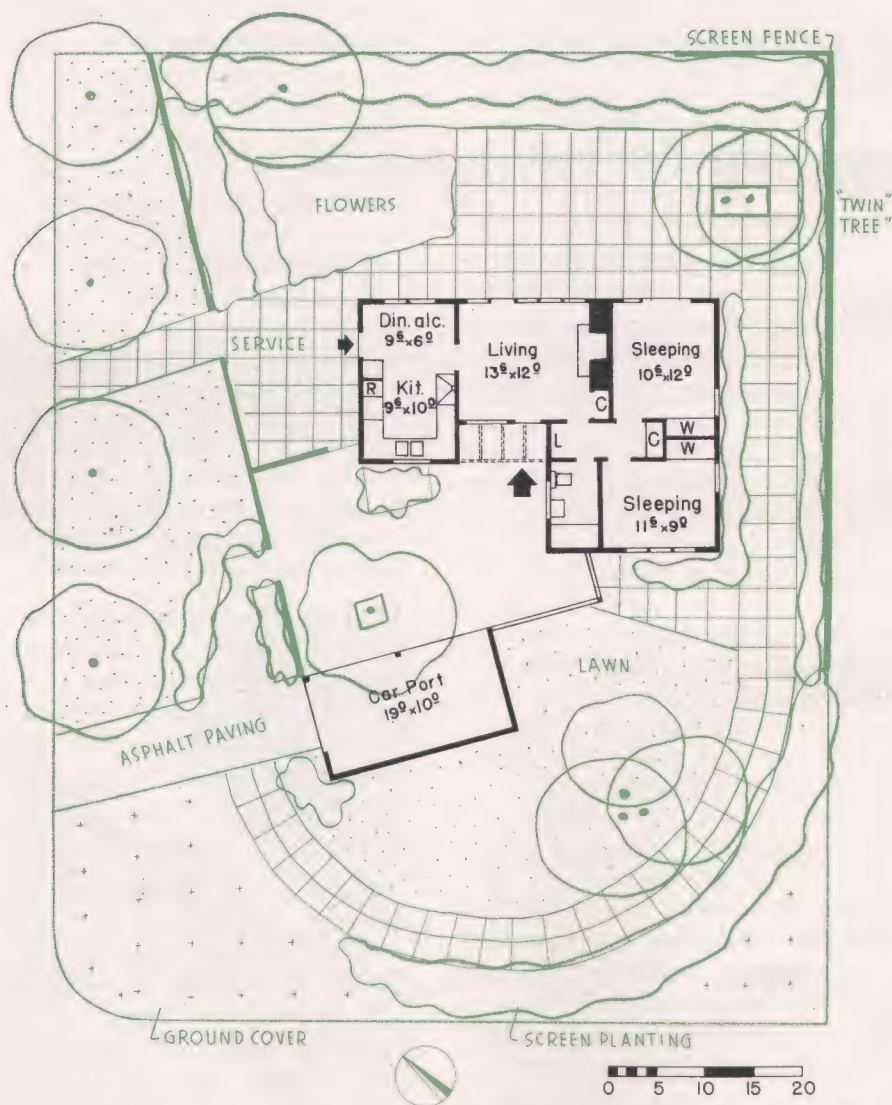


planting spaces to be used more effectively.

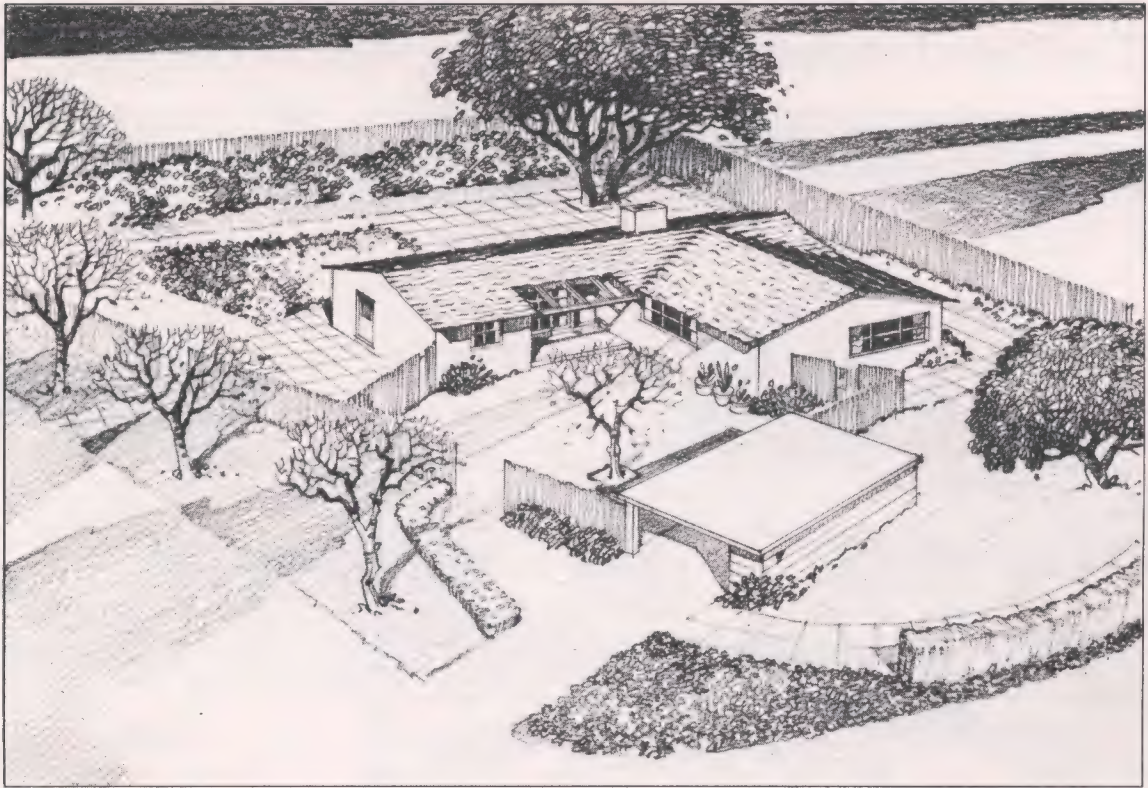
Space organized for living is not necessarily lacking in beauty. Note the two illustrations on the opposite page. The top drawing was made by the delineator to explain the house better. Landscape was "organized" by the artist merely so that it would aid in composing the picture. His organization has nothing to do with realities. It is his privilege to deal in dream space where there are no telephone poles, no neighbors, and where the boundaries of a 50-foot lot trail off into infinity. In the lower illustration, the artist followed the garden designer's plan. The boundaries are real and definite, the connec-

tions between the various outdoor areas are established, the use of the entire site is considered, and the space is thoroughly organized for use.

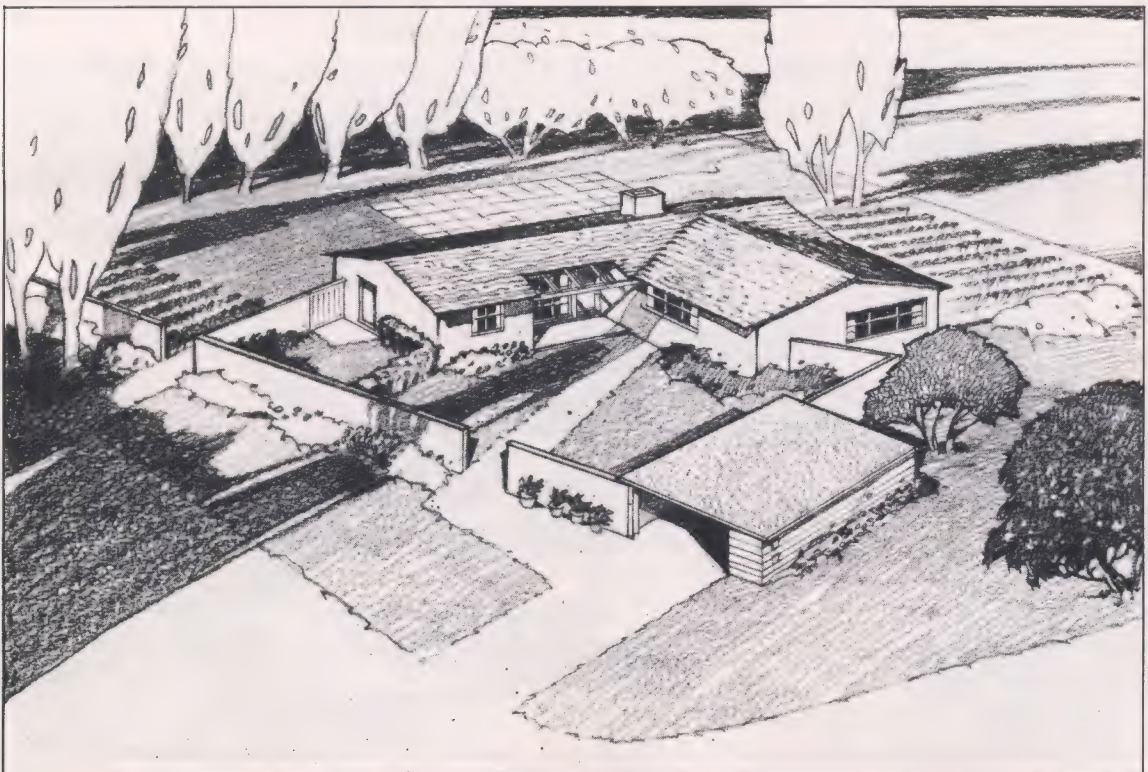
If you search each landscape plan for ideas, you will be rewarded. Don't expect any one garden to be just the garden for you. Use the plans as illustrations of the principles of garden design. If the suggested plants do not thrive in your area, any good nurseryman can suggest substitutes that will give the same form and height. Study the plans to see how you would move from house to garden, and through the garden; how you would live in the space that is yours.





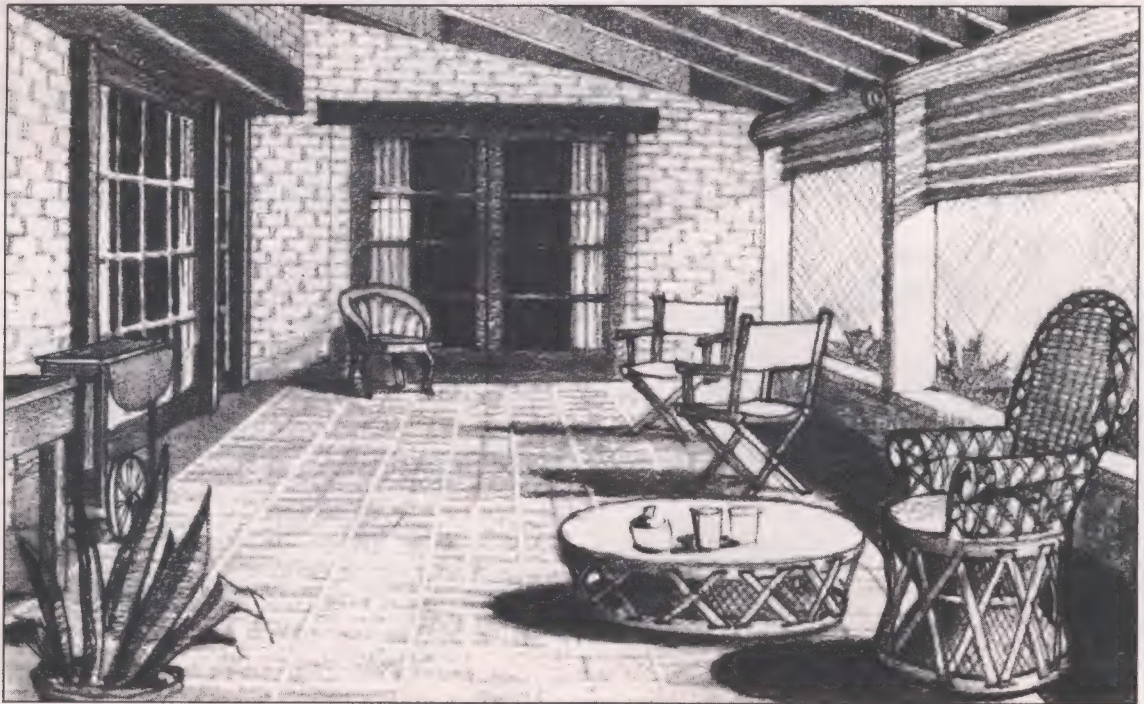


*Illustration above is based upon garden designer's plan on page 28. Below is architectural delineator's conception of same house and grounds*

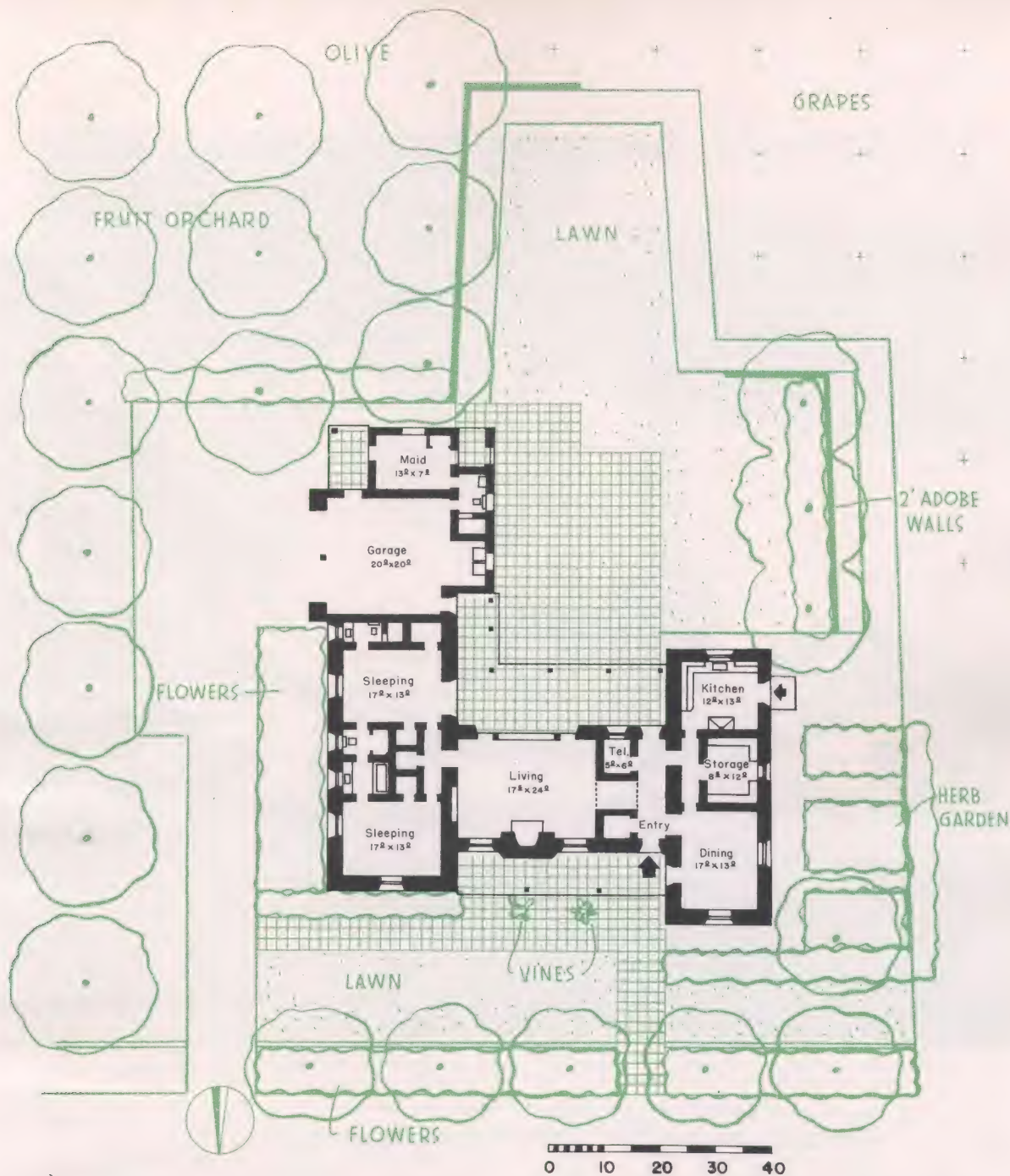




## The ranch house in Mexico







"Why tell me," a friend of ours asked, "what these Spanish Dons built 100 years ago? Why not show me what they would build today, with our great variety in building materials?"

We can't vouch for all of them, but if old José Manuel Machado built today and had the same good sense of restraint he displayed in 1830 (see page 11), he might very well have built the house presented here.

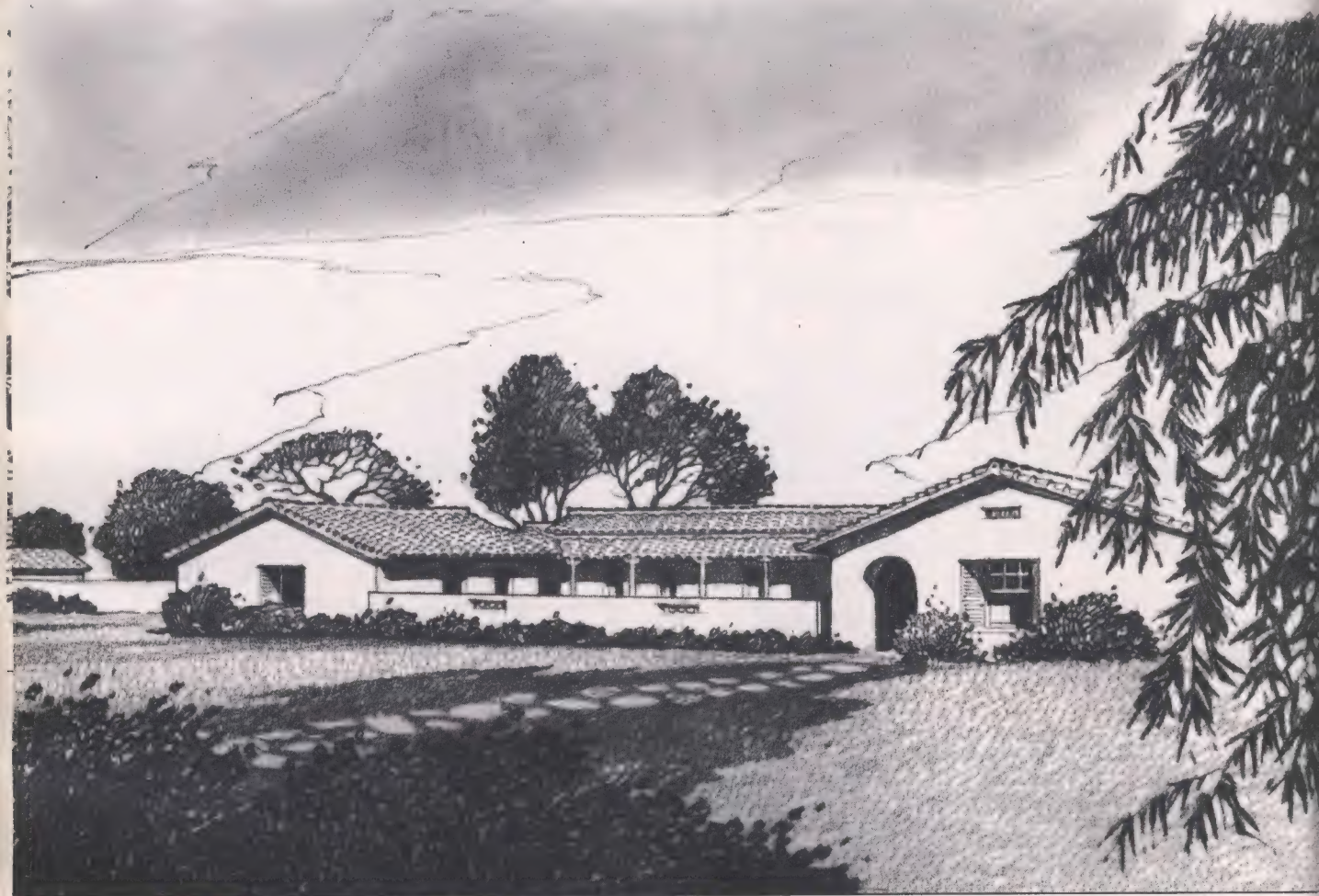
The adobe bricks would be as familiar to him as to the native of Hermosilla, Mexico, who

worked on the house. The placement of the servants' quarters at such a distance from the house would appear as natural to him as it does to the servants living in it. The distance between kitchen and dining room wouldn't bother him because the servants, not he, would walk it.

The wing formed by the garage and the servants' quarters adds to the size of the protected outdoor living area. Objection to cross traffic through the living room is lessened by the loggia connecting one bedroom and the hallway.



## The *corredor* has many functions



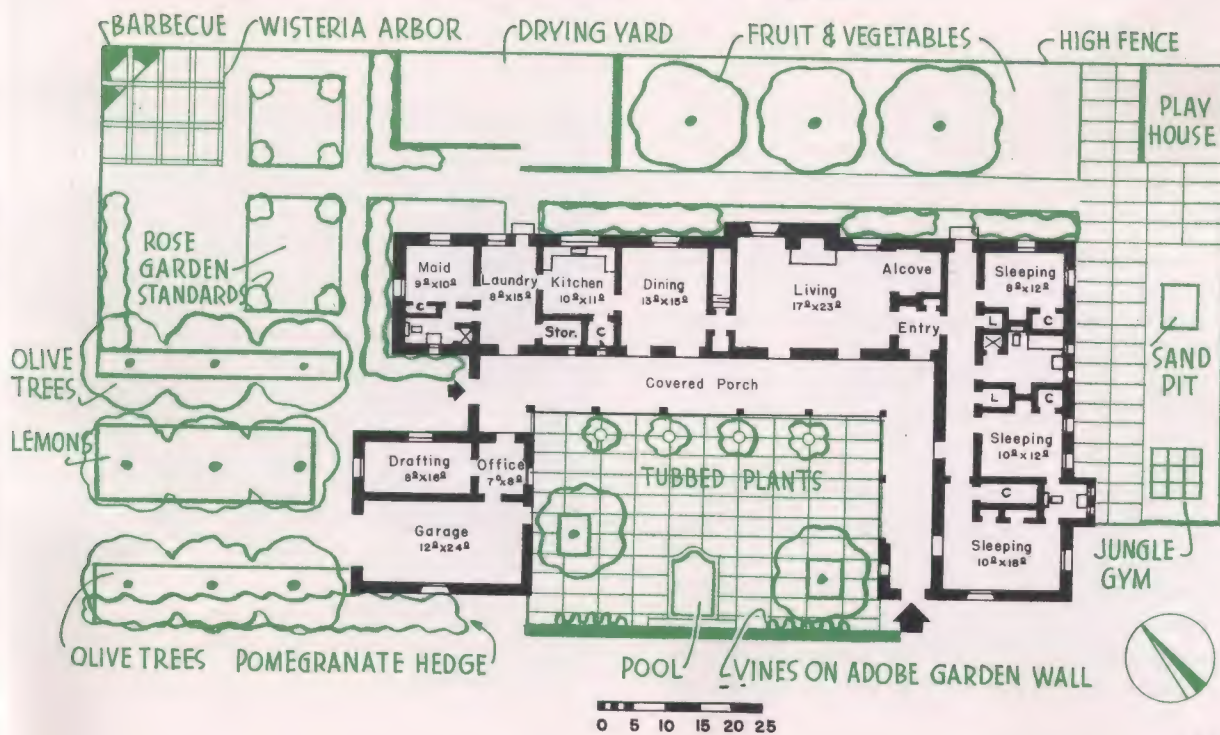
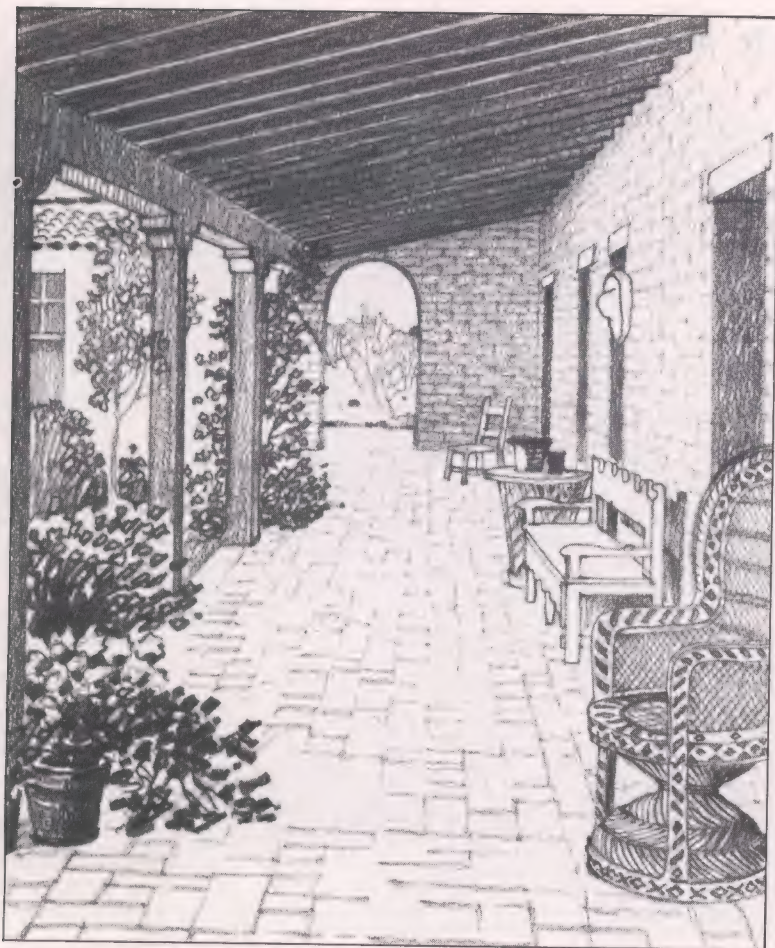
Tile roofs were common in the early ranches and are not at all out of place in the heavy-walled, modern adobe illustrated here. However, the too-free use of tile in the period of the all-too-cute "Spanish bungalow" built up an antagonism to roof tile that must be recognized by builders today.

Here, we are interested in what goes on under the roofs. It doesn't require imagination to see how much the traditional *corredor* adds in comfort and interest to every room in this house. The corridor offers a constant invitation to step

outdoors. It invites a stroll through the garden when you move between rooms. It provides an outdoor room for every room in the house.

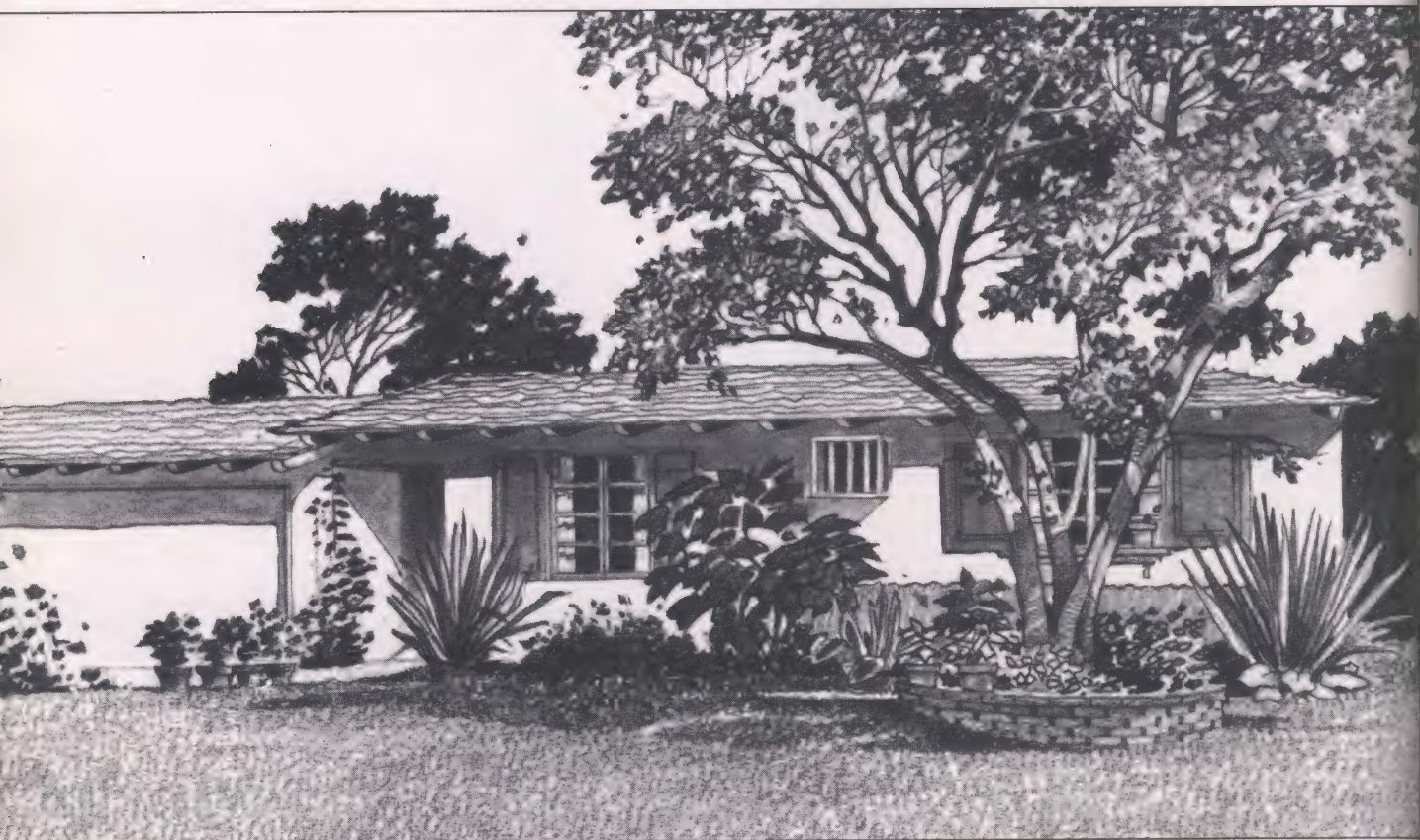
While this adobe home was built after long and thorough research into the architectural history of the early Spanish California adobes, the livability of the house is not compromised by adherence to tradition. There was no need for compromise. The old plan and the old material provided for the kind of living and the type of comfort appreciated in the warm valleys of California.







## The garden is an inside room



Here's a house within a garden and a garden within the house, with retreat-like privacy. All major rooms open onto the patio or corridor.

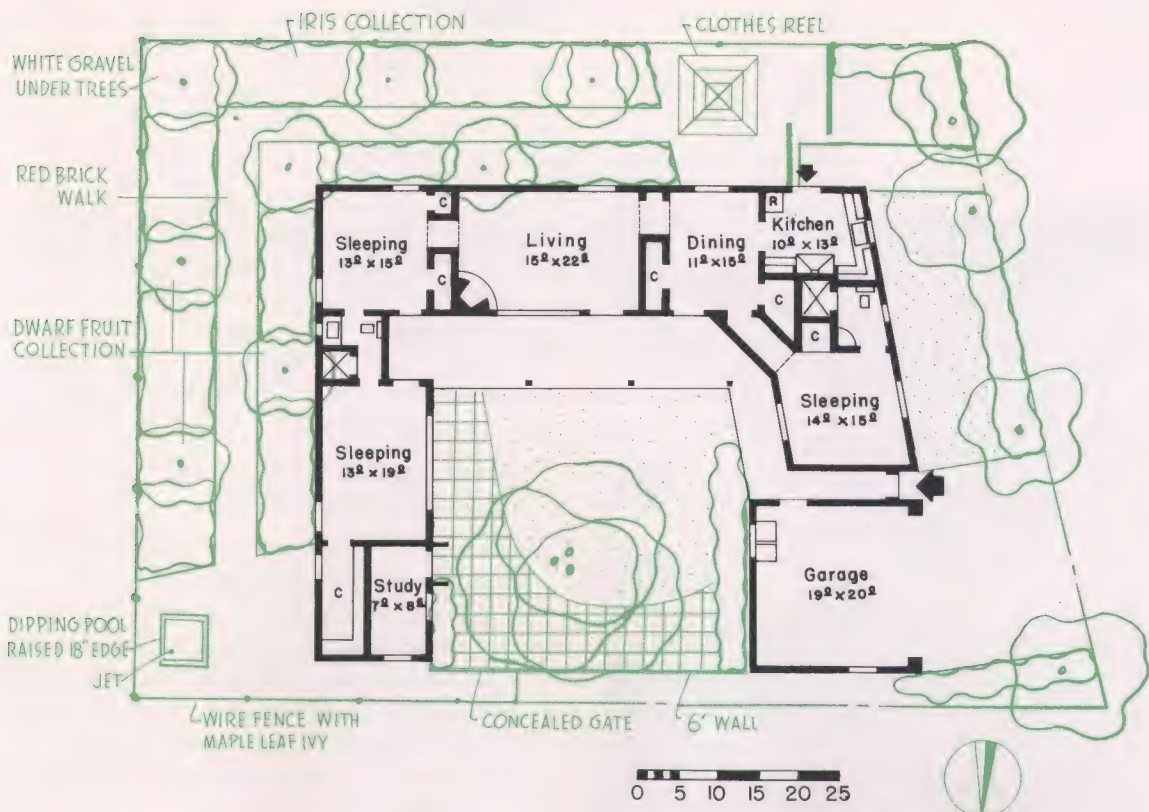
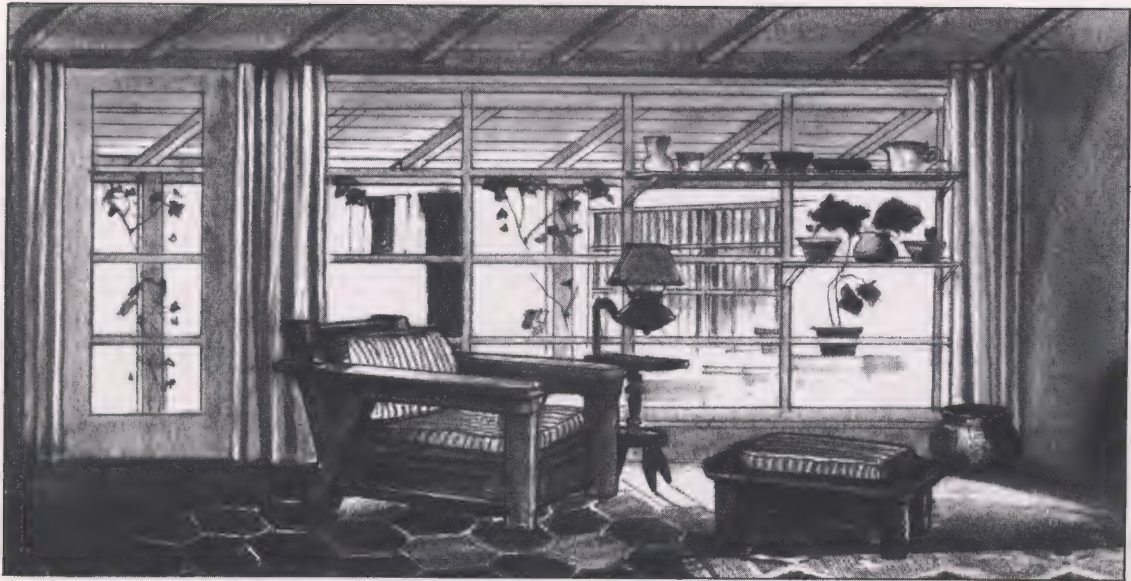
The patio is virtually the central room of the house. Living in this type of house, you feel a privacy that is comforting. You have your own little world inside the walls that face the street. With only glass between you and the patio, and the patio serving as a central room, the house never seems small.

If the owner plans much entertaining, the inside patio should be paved and the garden restricted to pots, tubs, and vines. Not only will such a garden stand the wear and tear of outdoor furniture, but it can also be cleaned with a hose and maintained with a kitchen fork. If the house were on a small city lot, there would be no out-



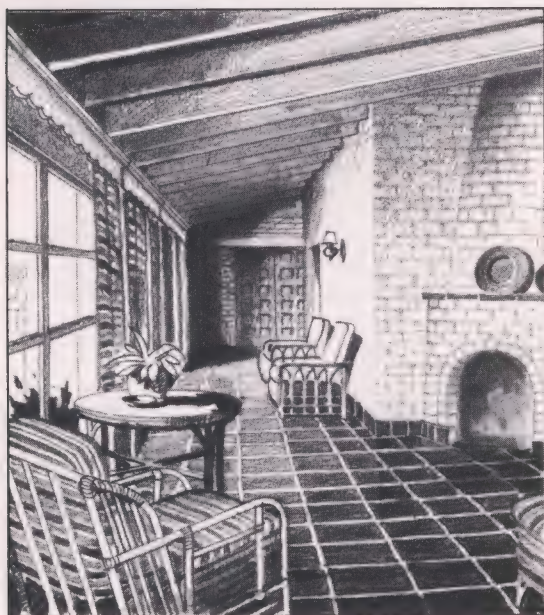
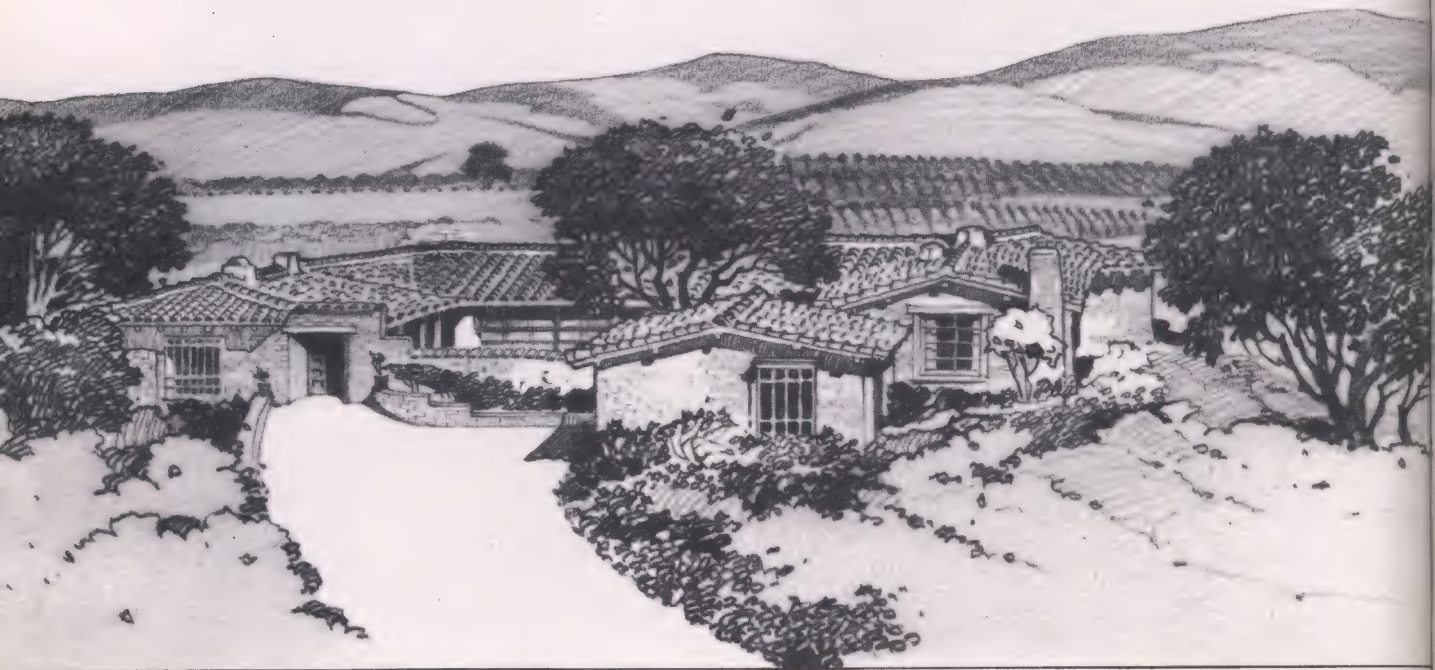
side garden. Where space allows, a well-controlled pathway garden (see plan) would be in perfect keeping.







## Its heritage is unmistakable



Remember the description of the Spanish house at Santa Fe? "The almost universal style of building, both in town and country, is in the form of a square with a courtyard in the center. A large door called a "saguán" leads from the street into the *patio* . . . in which the doors of the various rooms open."

You need no memory of the past to enjoy this modernization of an old form.

When this hilltop house was planned, the homeowner was unable to remove an obstacle that in one spot interfered with the sweeping view of the valley below. The problem was solved by an unusual room arrangement. By widely separating the living room and the dining room and placing the service wing between the two important rooms of the house, an unrestricted view was gained.





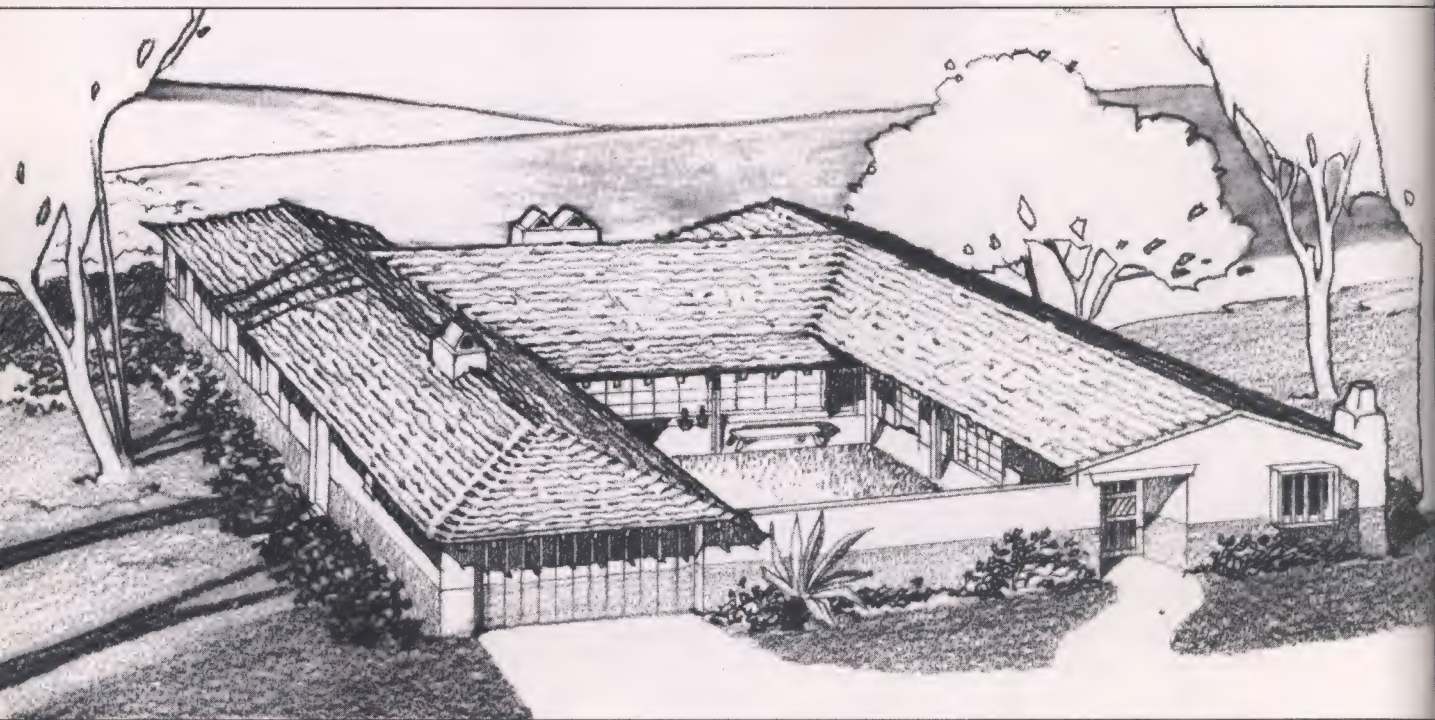
The old Spanish homes often used this room arrangement for an entirely different reason, however. Separation of the rooms added to the ceremony of dining, since it required a stroll from the living room down the attractive *corredor* to the dining room.

The loggia and corridor in this home are more

protected than the old type *corredors*, but they have not lost the old-style charm and livability. Since the entrance to the home is through the corridor, it is treated as an entrance hall and is almost enclosed by tropical vines. The full view of the patio opens up after you pass through the corridor.



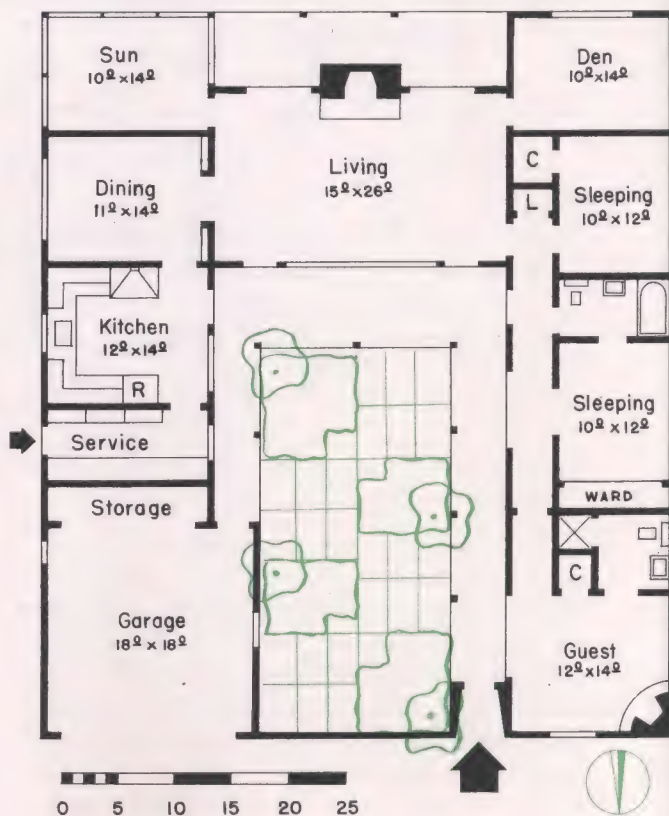
## Built around a patio



Another variation of the very early Spanish plan. The old-world idea of an inner court with walls of house or court shutting it off from the street has many advantages. In contrast to the box house, fully exposed in a row of houses, it gives privacy in both house and garden.

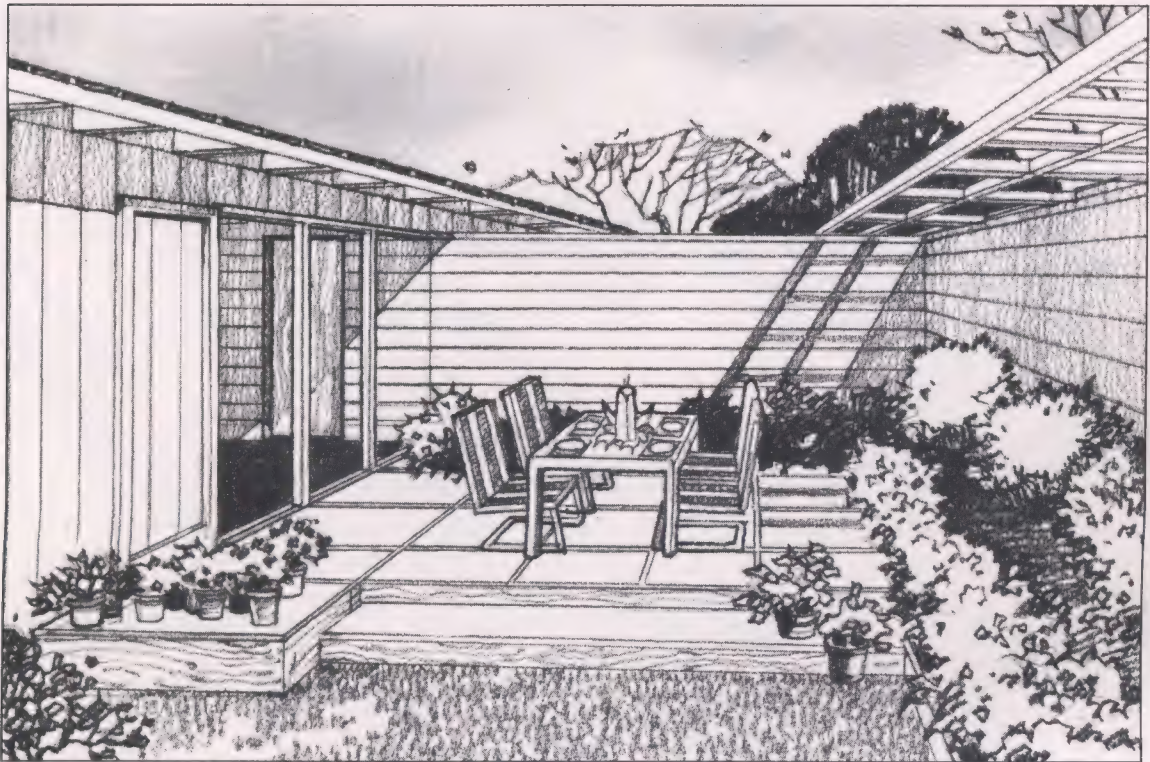
In this particular case, the placement of the house at the rear of the lot was dictated by the fact that the site overlooked a valley. The living room, den, and sun room look to the view and open to the garden. The same arrangements would give privacy from the street.

The "front door" is the garden gate. The indirectness of such an entrance is more than compensated by the pleasant surprise afforded by entering the house through the garden.



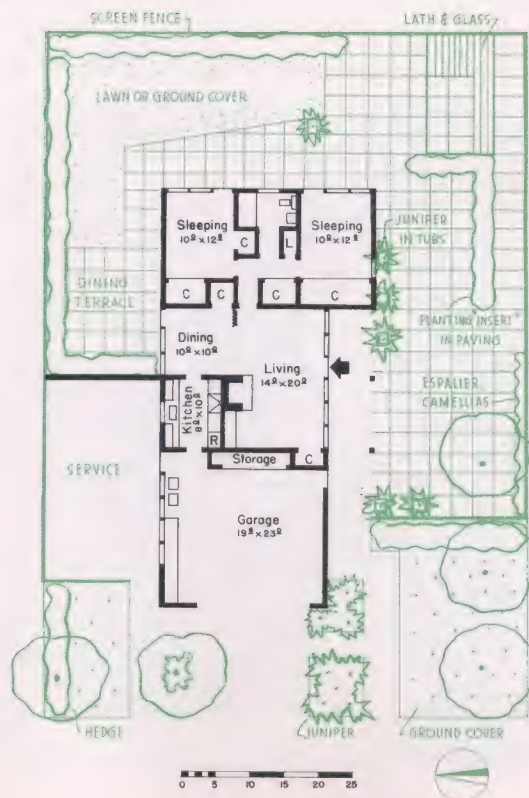


## City lots and patios



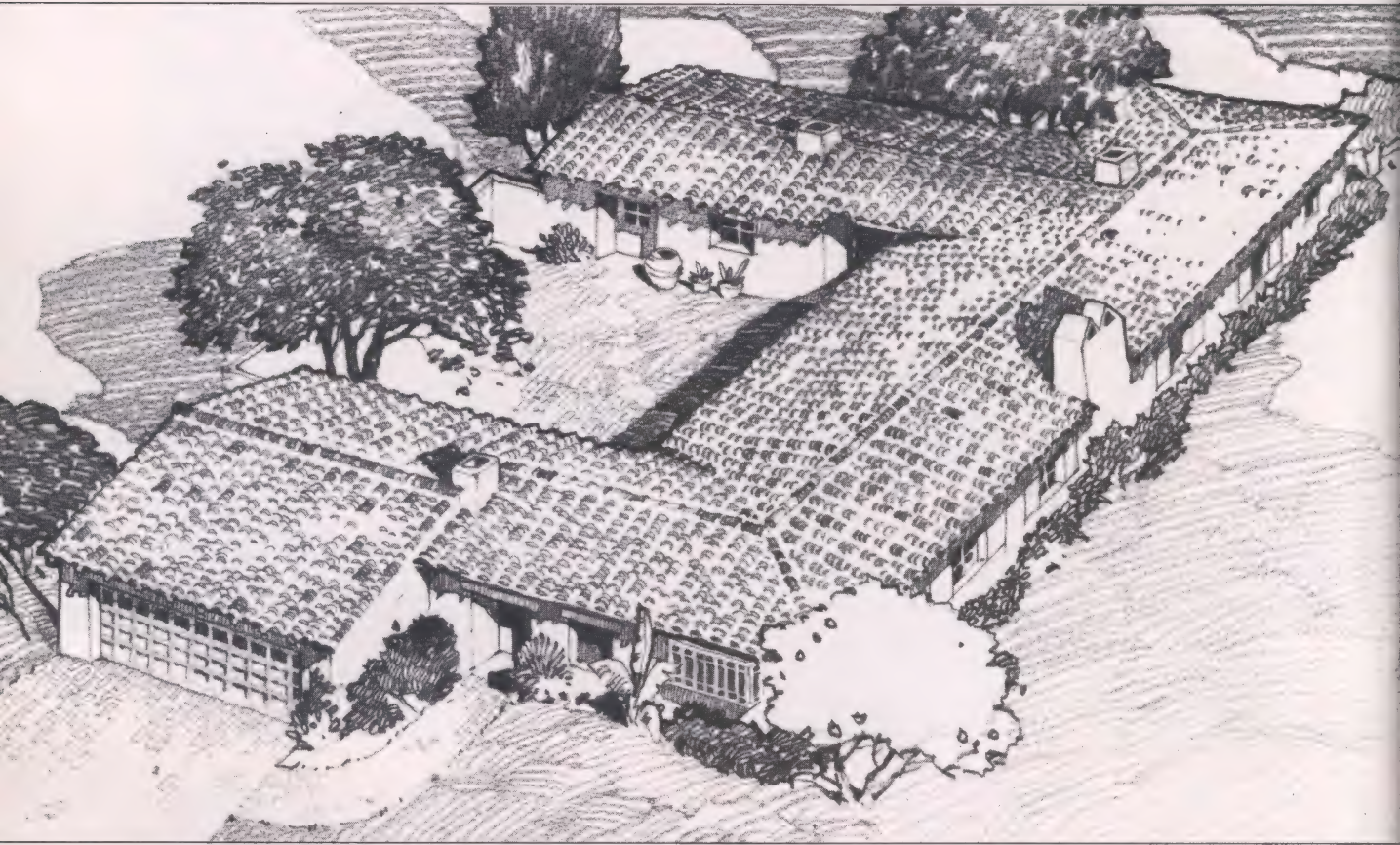
*Living space* should be defined as space that can be used comfortably, at least part of the time, for play, resting, eating, entertaining, etc. You cannot call just any area within the boundaries of your lot *living space*. If there is no connection between it and the house, the space will be used infrequently. If the space is in full view of the neighbors, its use will be limited. If it is unprotected from rain, wind, or hot sun, it could not honestly be counted as livable space.

Here, a small ranch house has been placed on a 70-by-100-foot lot. By careful planning, each function of the house has been given its own special extension into the garden. The living-room patio and living-room porch more than double the livability of the living room. The private bedroom terrace and the glass between it and the bedrooms increase the livability of those rooms actually and visually.





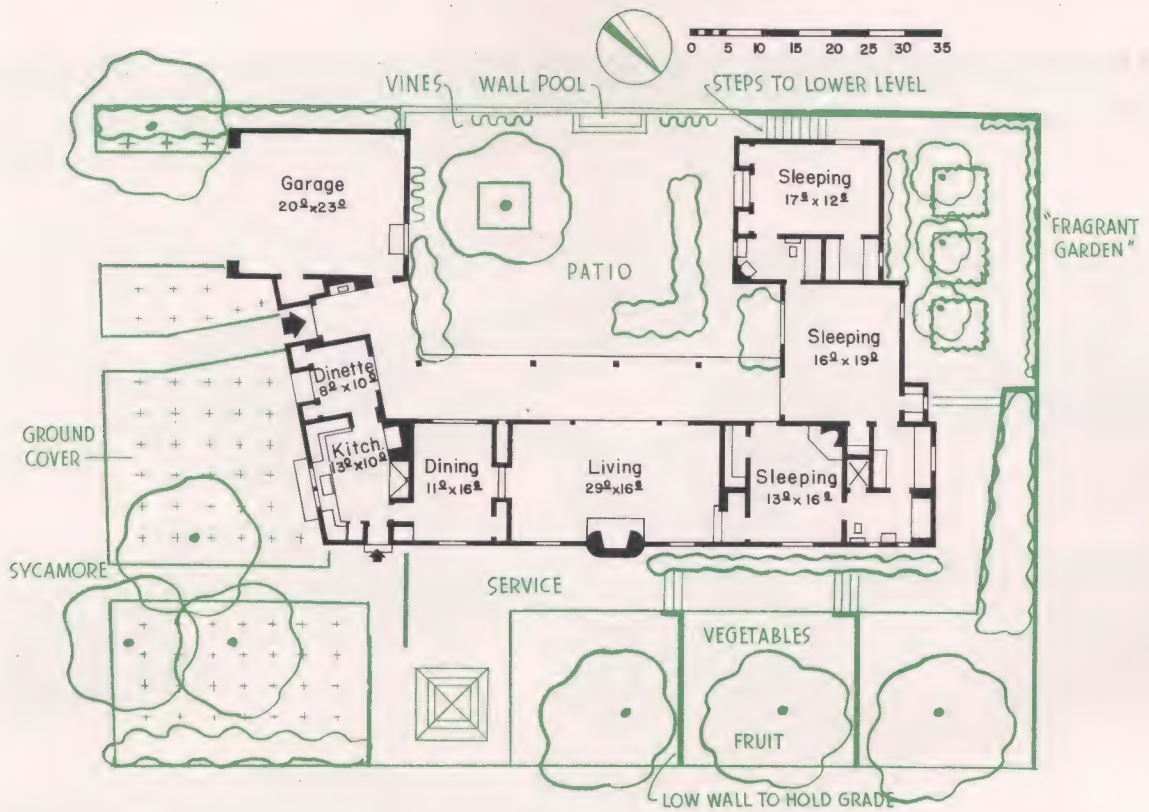
## The garden gate is the front door



If you say, "I don't like tile roofs," when you first look at this house, the house is dead as far as you are concerned. But if you mentally change the roof to shakes and then study the plan, the house and its possibilities will come to life for you.

As landscaped here, it is located on a large suburban lot that slopes gradually from front to rear. The patio is at entrance level, but the rear and side garden are terraced. The "front" door opens into the garden porch, and your entrance into the living room is through a wide hallway furnished with colorful, fragrant vines. You feel that you are *in* the house as soon as the garden gate closes behind you.







## Where there's room, let the house ramble

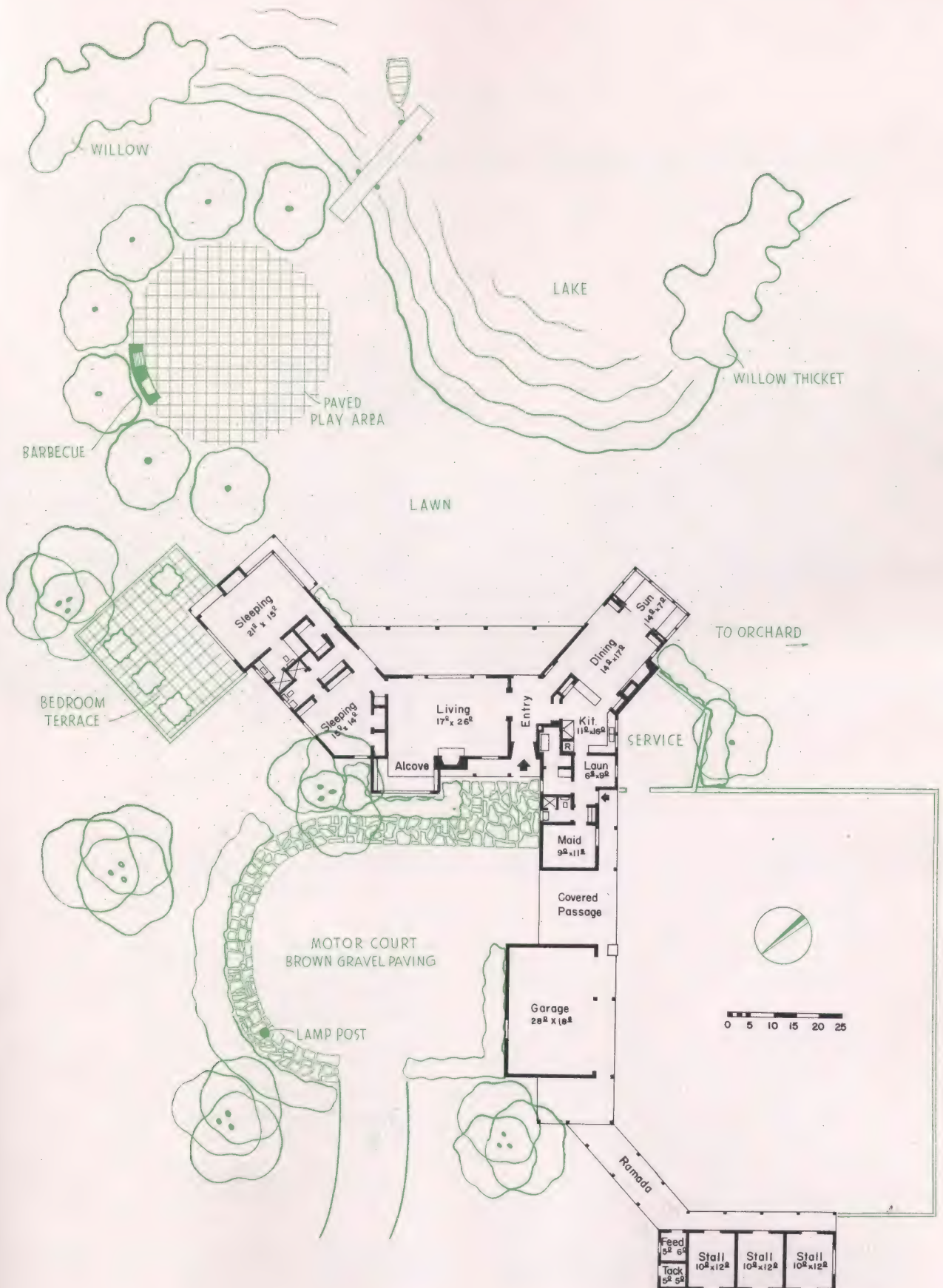


When the ranch house includes stables, store houses, shelters, etc., there are values in tying all of them together in one unit. Here, the covered passageway and the covered lath shelter are the connecting links. The attached buildings divide the area interestingly and give the house the appearance of great spaciousness.

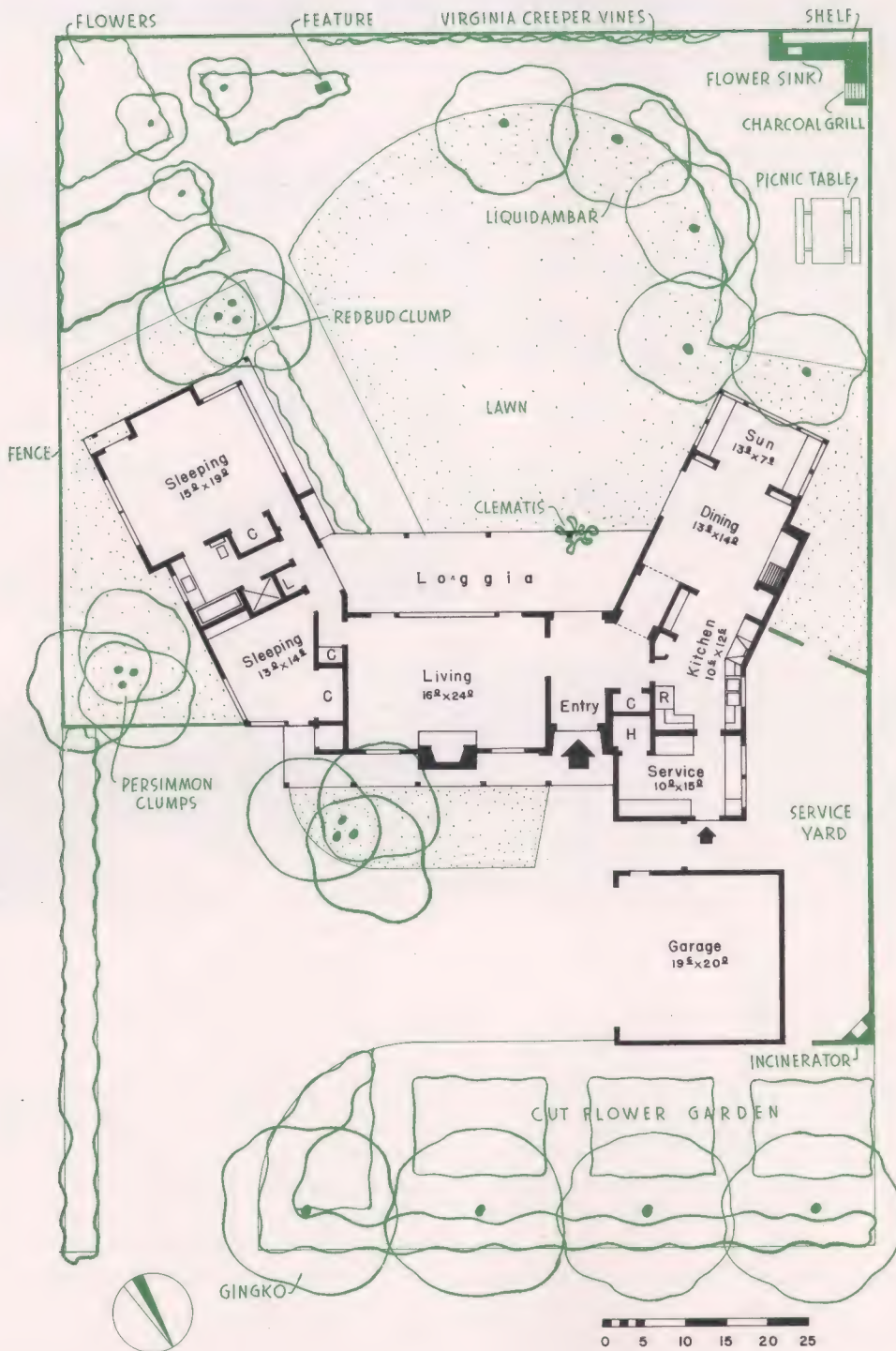
Features of interest: The high-walled bedroom patio was included regardless of the general seclusion of the house. The high wall enclosure serves as window shades and locked windows. The outside door of your bedroom can be wide

open and you can stroll inside without thought of appearance. The dining-kitchen allows the hostess-cook to keep up with the party. (See illustration 36 in photograph section.) The barbecue area is connected with the lake rather than the house. Since the dining-kitchen combination takes care of all occasions except an outdoor picnic, a barbecue terrace next to the kitchen would be a duplication of facilities. By creating an outdoor terrace near the lake, a complete change of background and atmosphere is made possible.







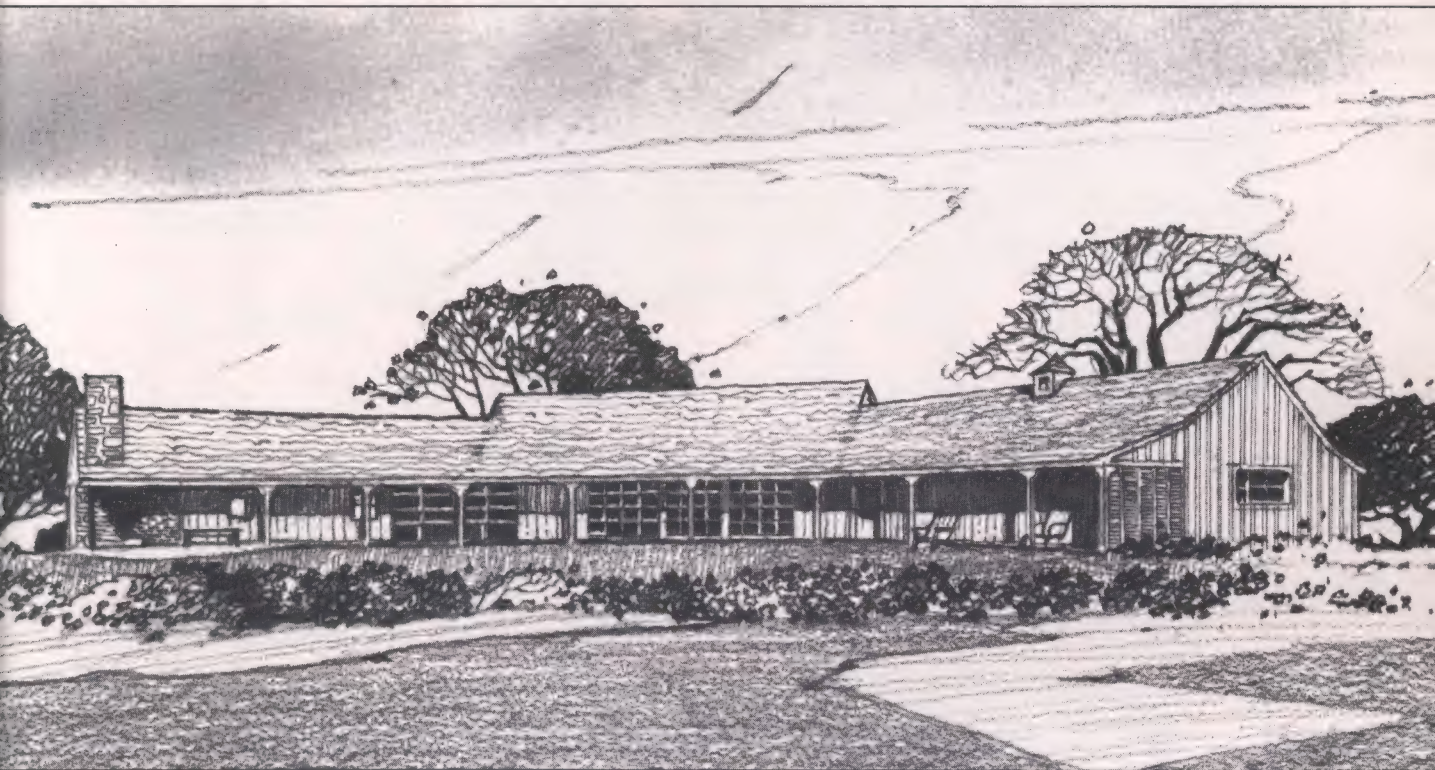


Revamping the spread-out plan on the preceding pages to fit a smaller site demonstrates the

flexibility and compressibility of the typical ranch house plan.



## The house spreads out to get a view



Most of the things people look for in a ranch house can be found in this home.

The wide porch at ground level, wide doors in every room opening onto the porch, give the house a freedom of movement that encourages informality, a good time. From the entry hall, the view across the living room, through the glass doors, invites you to explore. Your eye catches a corner of the brick-walled kitchen and the barbecue at the end of the porch. You stroll the length of the porch looking out over the rolling hills. A small stable below the house fits well into the scene.

No one should live in this house unless he is willing to receive guests anytime, day or night.

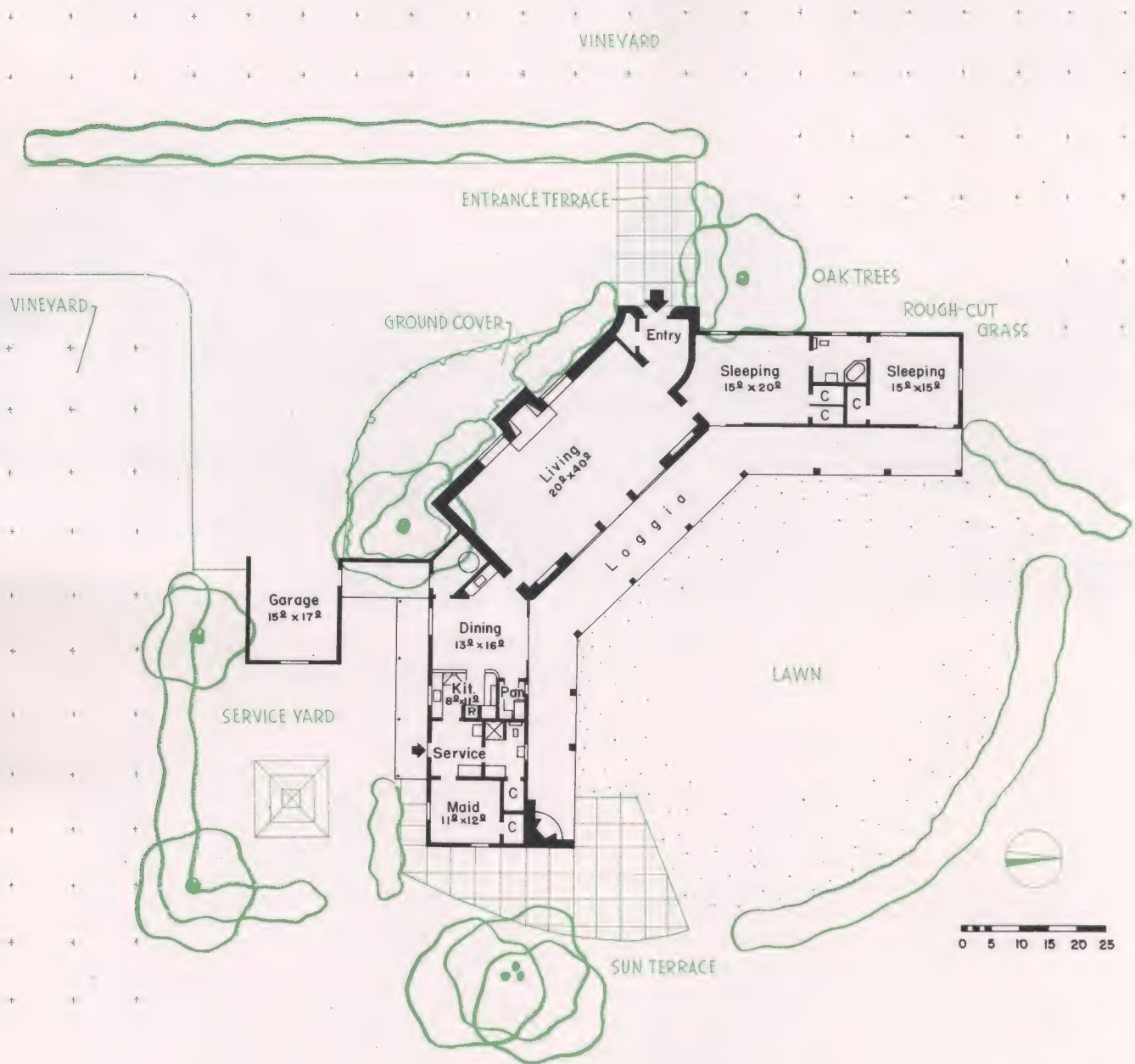
The wide porch is the most important feature of the house. (Some day there will be "porch

houses" wherein two rooms—living-kitchen and bedroom-sitting room—are attached to an immense living porch.) Of course, the livable area of such a house will contract and expand according to the weather outside but, since our living follows that cycle now, such a variation is not too objectionable.

The owners of this house are very much pleased with their heating plant. One of the first installations of panel heating (radiant heat) in the San Francisco Bay area, it has performed satisfactorily under difficult conditions. The glass areas in living and dining room are extensive. The daily range of temperature is often more than 30 degrees. Hot water coils are embedded in the concrete slab floor.

The setting and the house fit together so comfortably that any landscaping which attempted



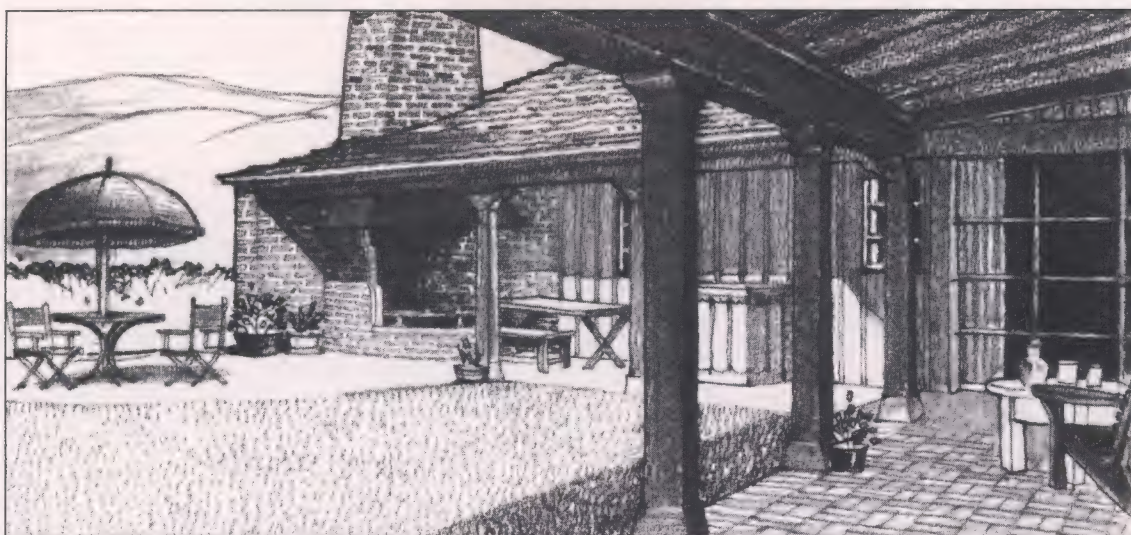


to create any other type of setting would appear artificial. The house is a part of the rolling hills around it. The use of grape vines in the transition between house and hills works well in this type of ranch home. They are natural

enough in the landscape and yet, seen from any angle, have a geometric pattern in keeping with the house.

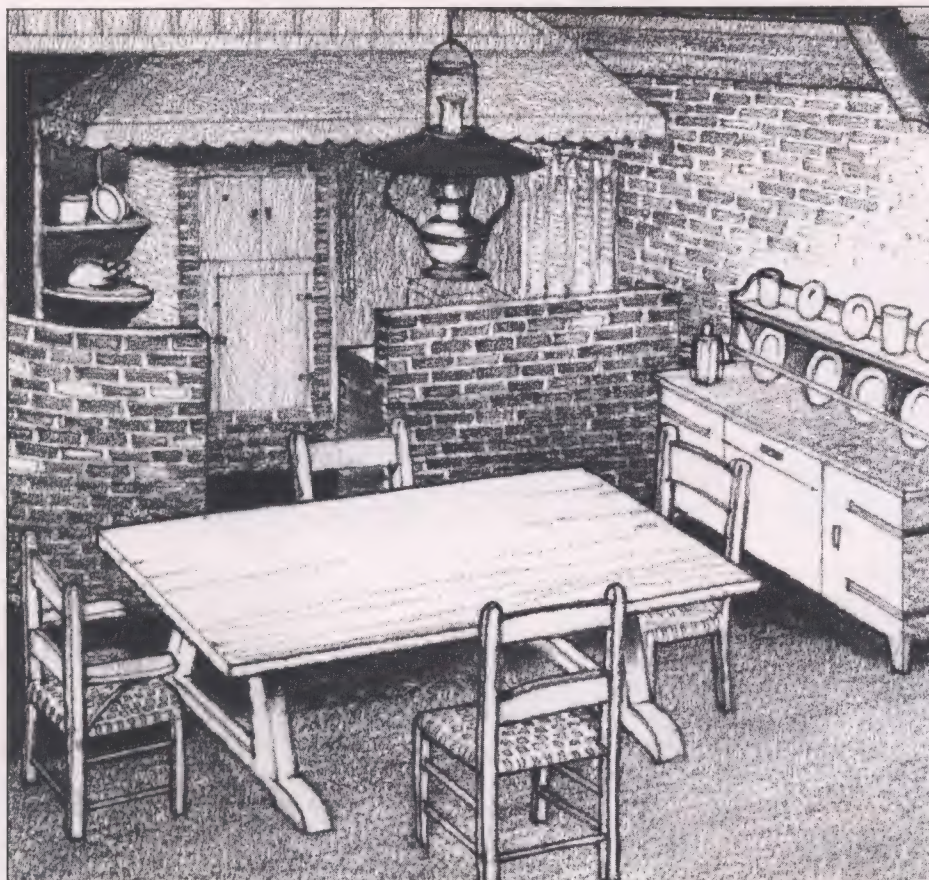
If specialty or vegetable gardens are wanted, they can be located with freedom in any di-





rection from the house. As it should be, the landscape pattern is set in such a large scale that it cannot be disturbed by minor additions. Wall construction is of double brick with air

space between in the living room; single wall with board and batten in service wing; brick walls in combination dining room and kitchen (to give it an informal atmosphere).



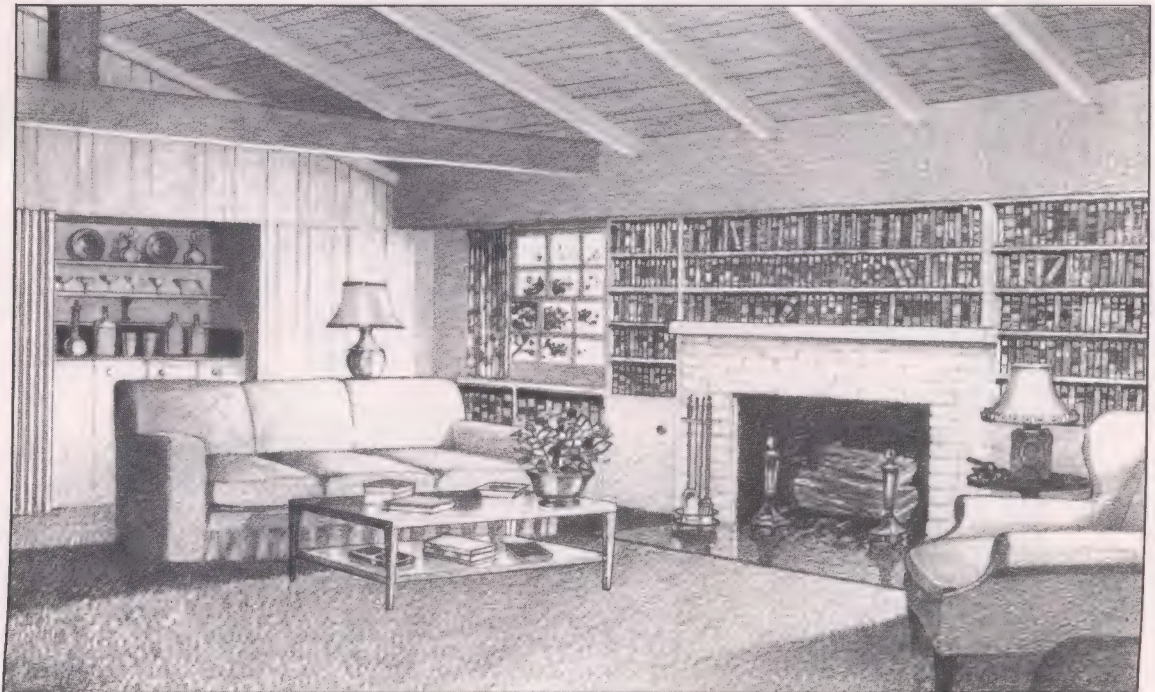


## Spaciousness by the division of space

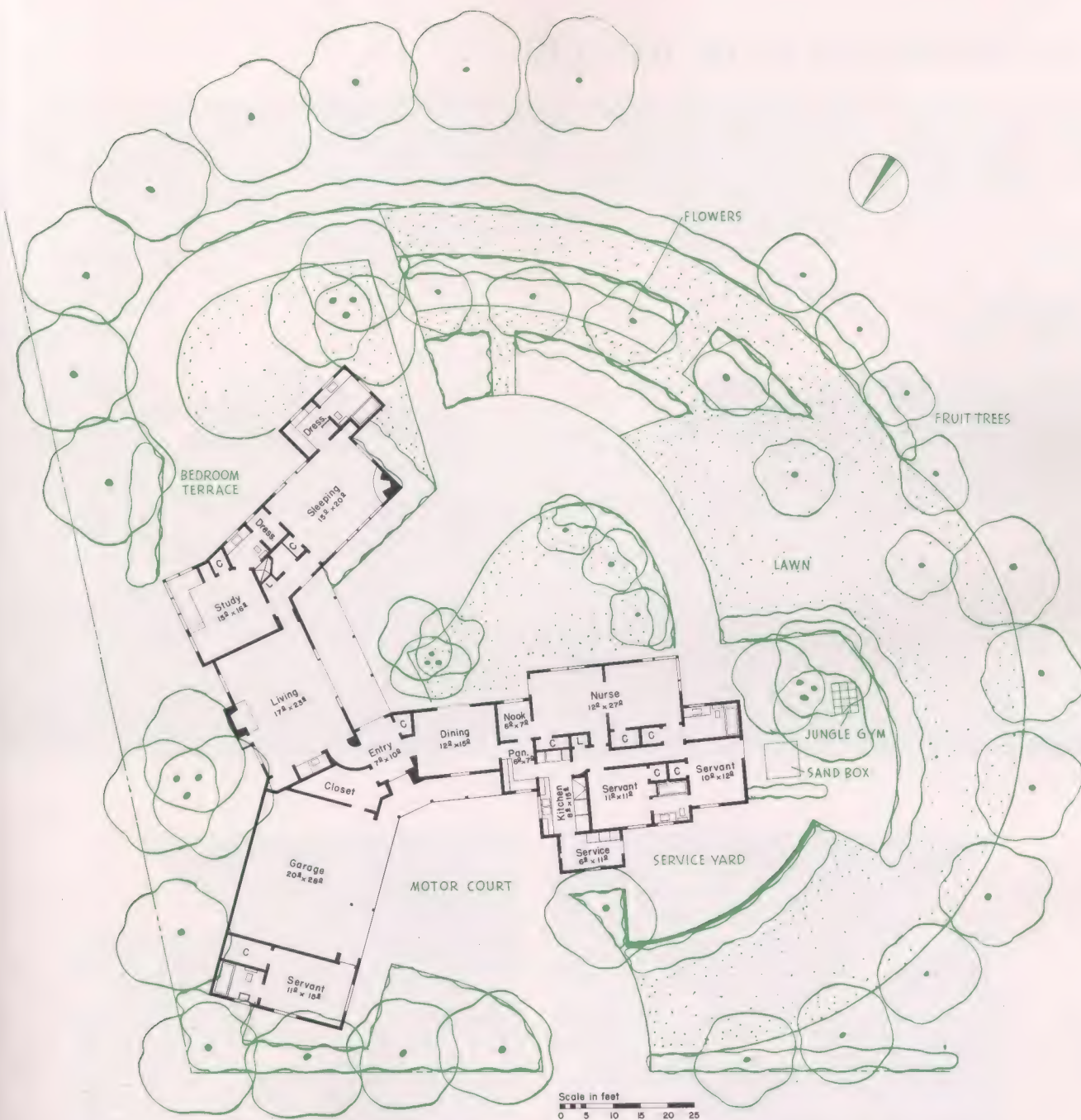


A bird's-eye view of this home immediately suggests one of the Early California ranchos wherein the house had expanded to provide for the growth of the family and many a guest.

However, the plan arrangement is not based upon appearance. The separate wings have definite functions. One wing, such as the nursery, can be closed off with sliding doors which di-







vide it into a playroom by day and bedroom by night. This arrangement allows the children to retire and arise early, come and go without disturbing the rest of the household. Where owners are professional people and certain hours for privacy are necessary, this arrangement is especially desirable.

Bar and projection room can be a part of the living room or closed off with accordion doors.

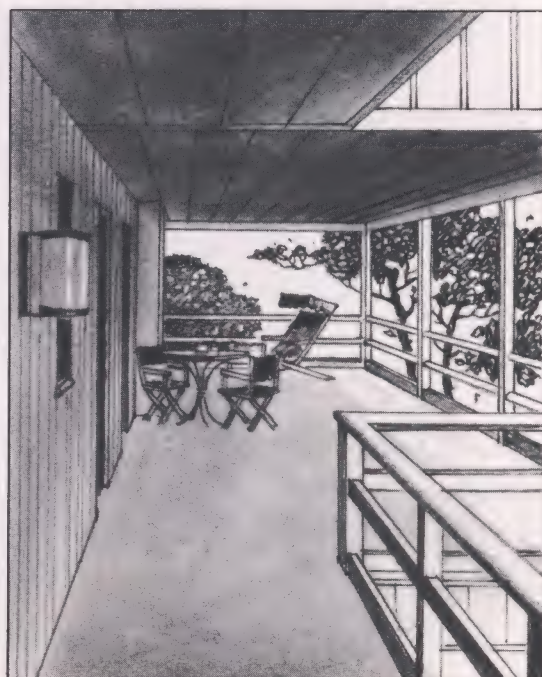
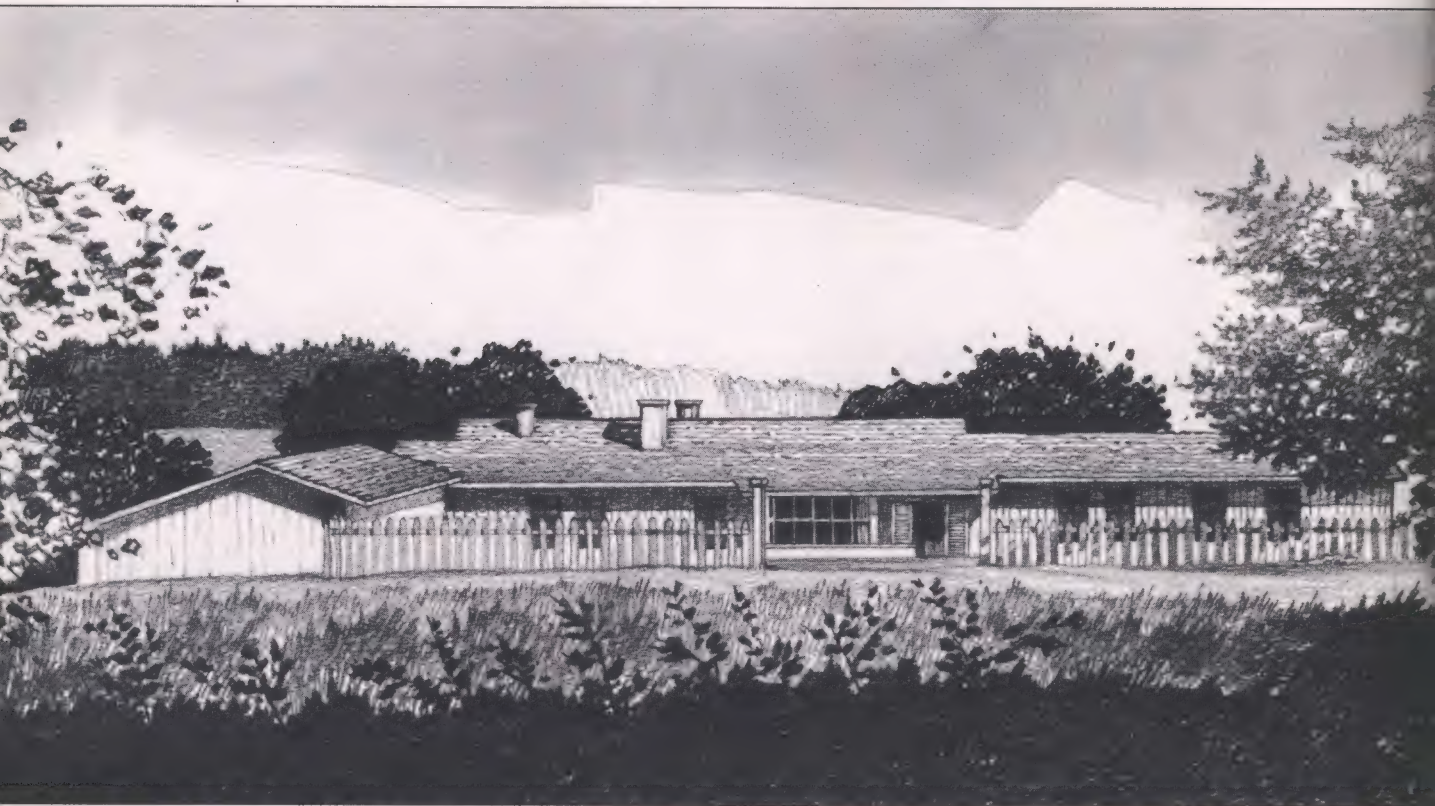
Large storage space is provided in passageway from entrance hall to garage. Such things as out-going cleaning, empty soft drinks cases, etc., are stored here.

The kitchen gives view of motor court, enabling the housekeeper to check on the front door.

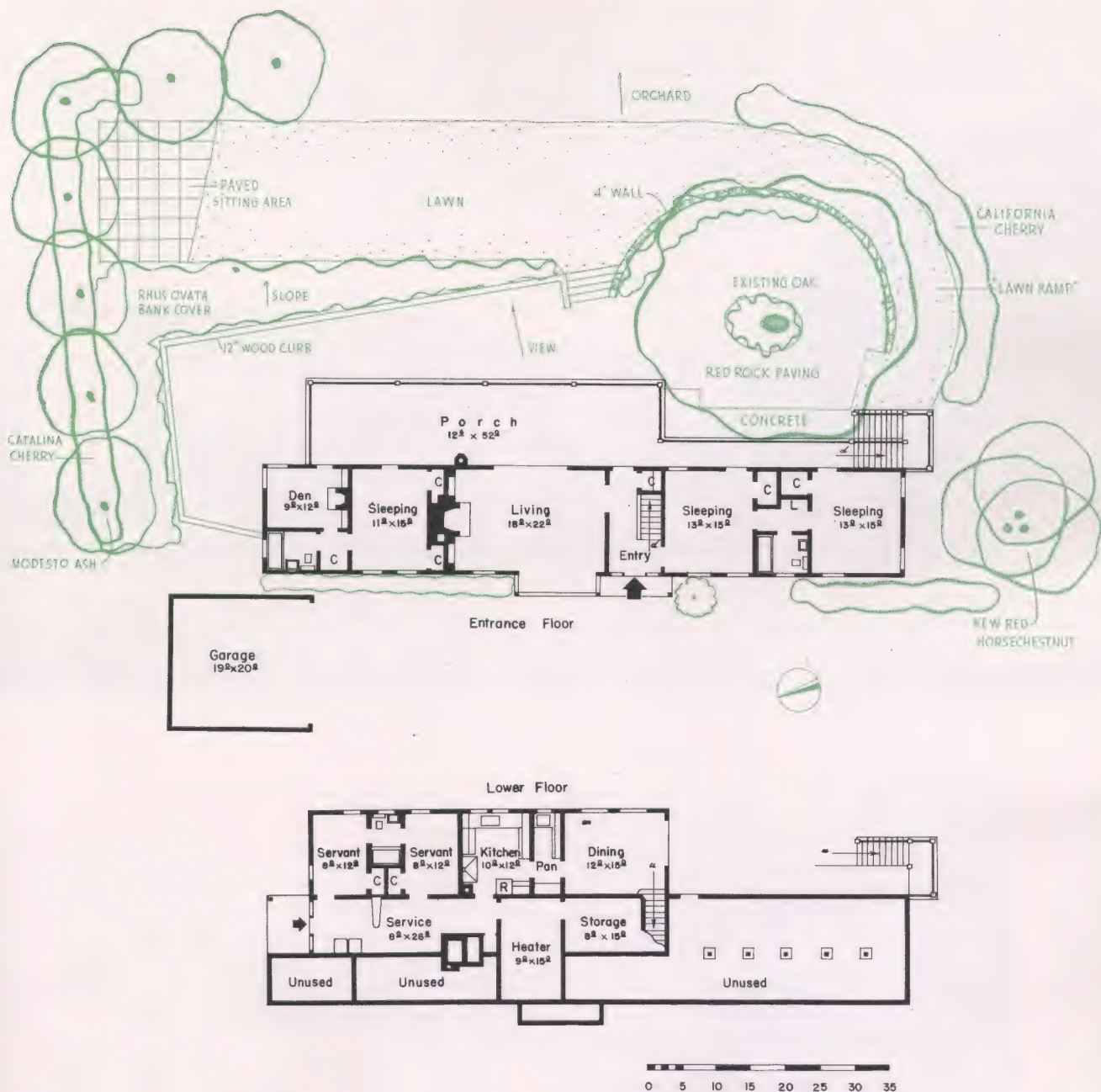
Location of living room and bedrooms to the rear adds to their privacy.



## Below the brow of a hill





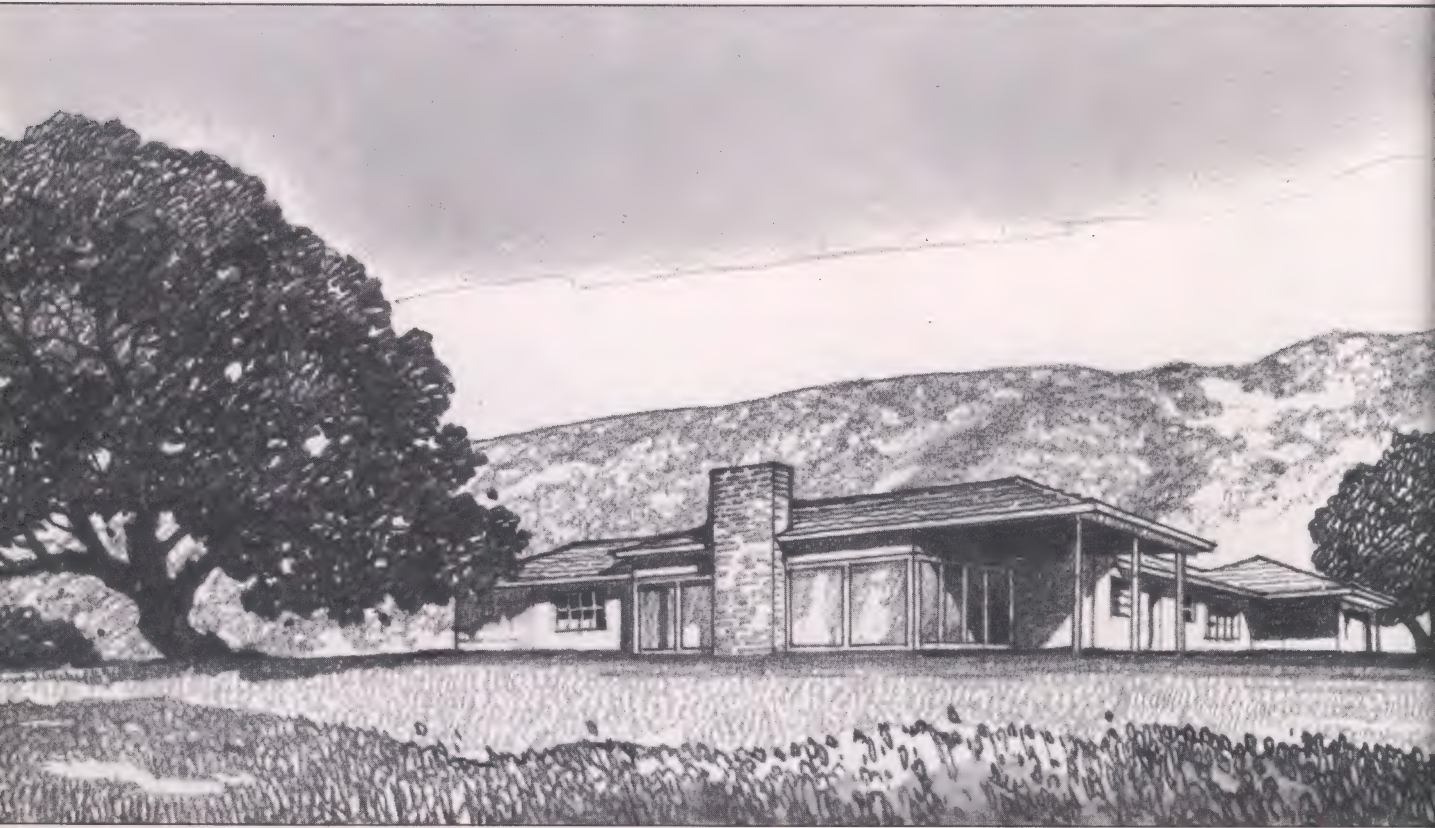


That a ranch house can step down a hill gracefully and naturally is proved here. All of the rooms on the entrance floor have access to a long porch facing the view of the valley. The paved terrace beneath the porch level, shaded by a huge oak tree, solves, in the simplest way,

the problems of outdoor dining and relaxing. The division between living and service areas is dictated by the slope of the lot from front to back. Locating the owners' bedroom, den, and bath at one end of the house, and the two guest rooms at the other, is true Western hospitality.



## It can spread out like an oak tree

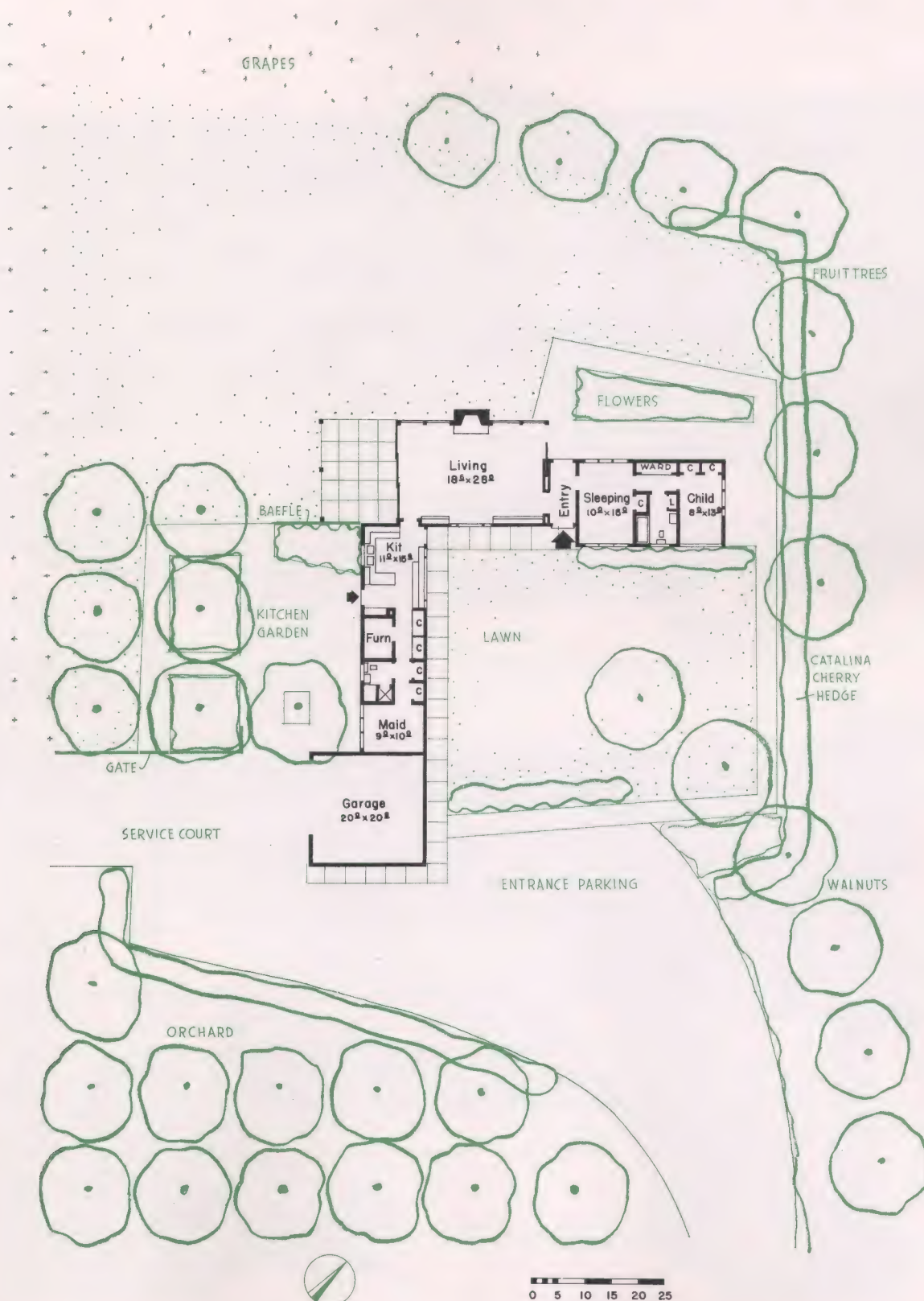


A wide-spreading oak tree can stand alone in the middle of three acres and fit so well into the landscape that no other growth seems necessary. The sprawling ranch house, using simple, traditional materials, can do the same thing, whether it is protected by the traditional ranch house porch or the contemporary overhang.

The orientation of the house is planned for mild winters and warm summers. Glass walls on the northern exposure should be of insulated glass where winters are more severe.

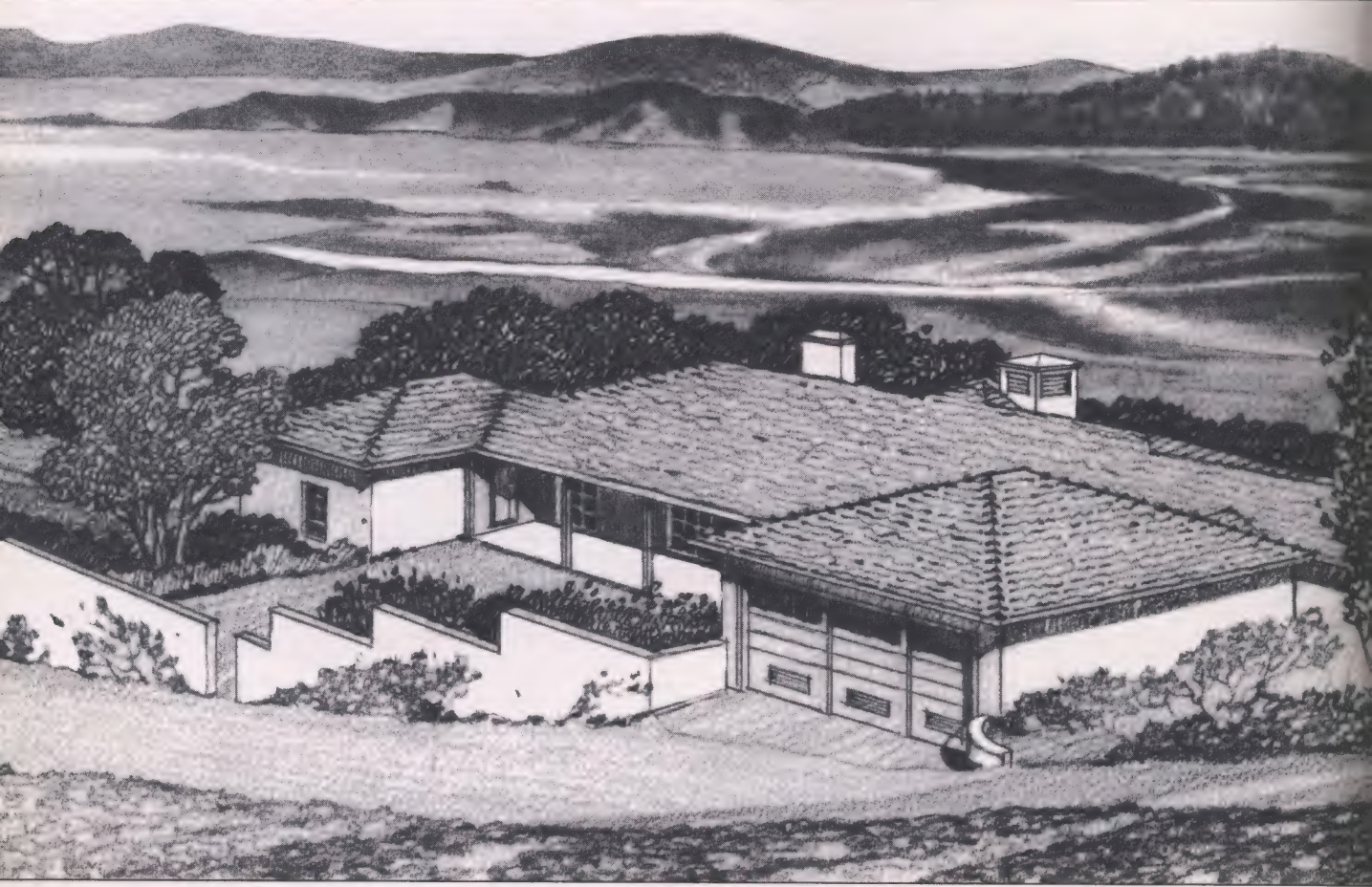
The spread-out plan of this type offers possibilities for expansion and growth not found in more compact arrangements. Bedrooms or guest rooms could be added directly to the bedroom wing or built beyond it and connected with a passageway.







## Hillsides and covered passageways



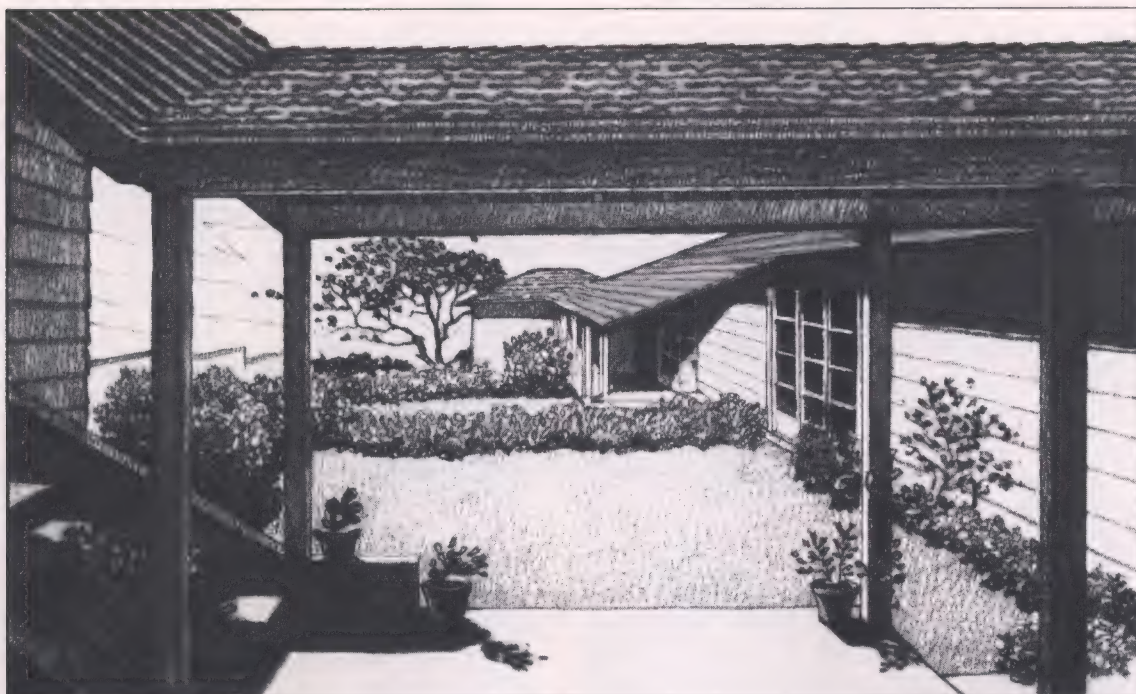
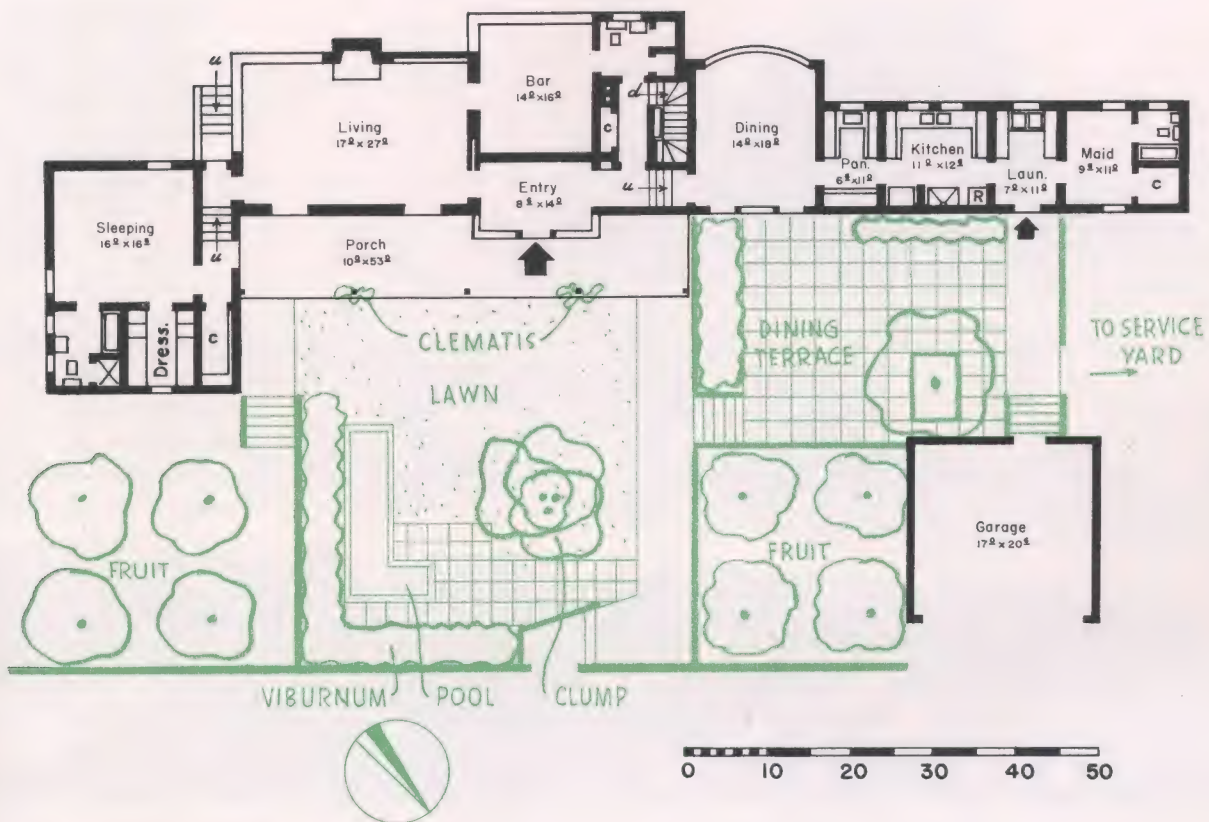
There were no bulldozers when the first ranch houses were built, so when the building site happened to slope two ways, the rooms of the house naturally followed one contour and stepped down with the other slope.

If this house does nothing more than illustrate that point, it should be worth attention. But equally interesting is the manner in which the house has been planned to take full advantage of the spectacular view of San Francisco Bay and the surrounding shores.

The use of the covered passageway between garage and house is typical of the ranch house, as is the secluded, wind-protected garden.

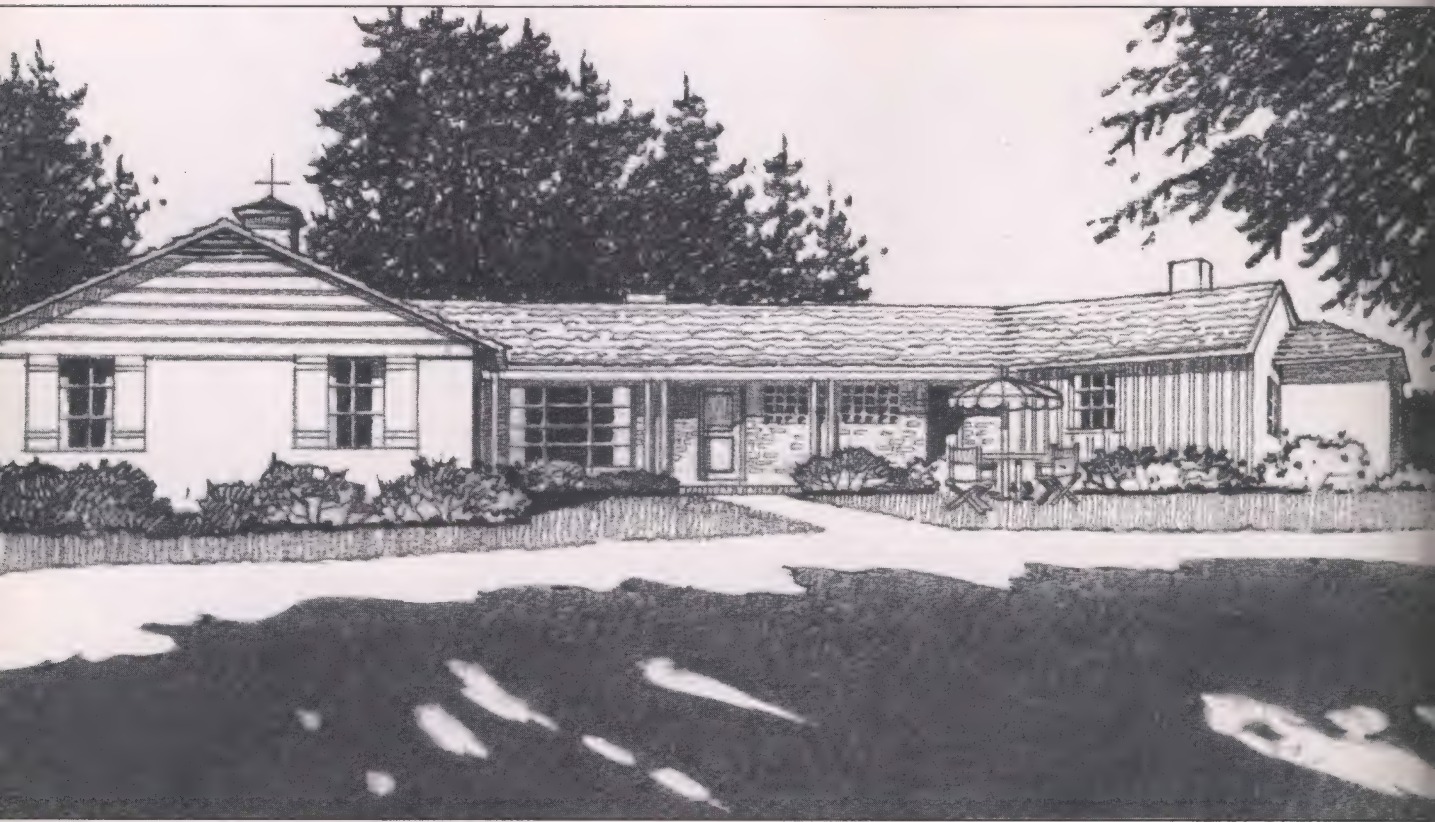
People who live in view houses are wise to provide escape from the view. The more dramatic and stimulating the scene, the more necessary becomes a way of occasional escape. An intimate garden shielded from the view (and wind) allows the human being to regain the human scale — by measuring himself against a 6-inch flower pot instead of a mountain.







## Ranch house in the north country



Garages and barns seldom worry the ranch-house planner. When it is a wing, the garage is architecturally a part of the house and adds to the livability of the outdoor area by protecting it from wind. The angling of rooms from the basic rectangle also gives the outdoor rooms a protected and comfortable feeling. However, the additional construction cost is generally too high to warrant such whims, and planners should try for simpler solutions. The small stable and barn illustrated here achieve the same feeling, and greater livability, without any structural complications.

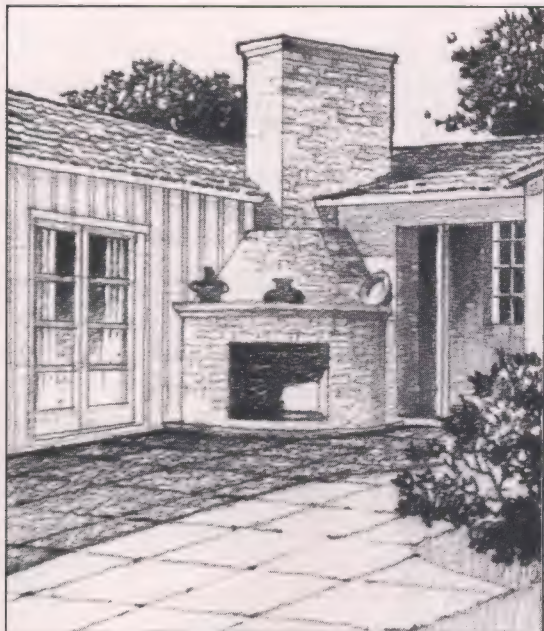
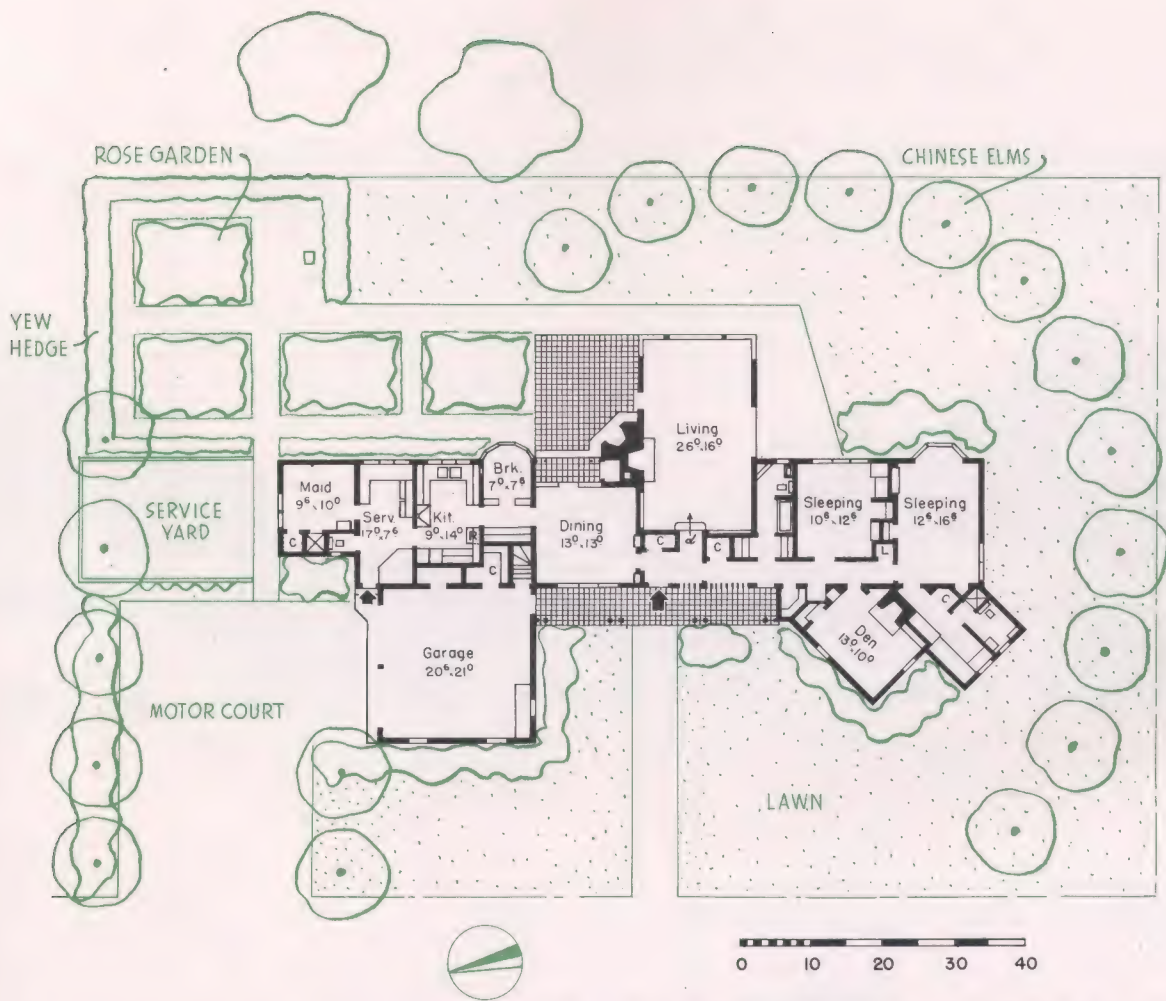
The three outdoor rooms are located so that any desired degree of sun can be enjoyed. The dining terrace is flooded by the morning sun and is a cool spot on warm summer afternoons. The

living-room terrace will be warm in early summer and late fall whenever the sun shines. The front terrace offers another escape from the too-warm summer sun.



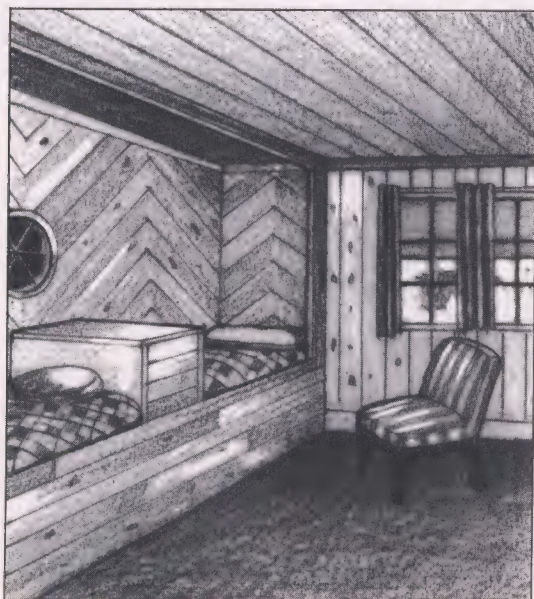
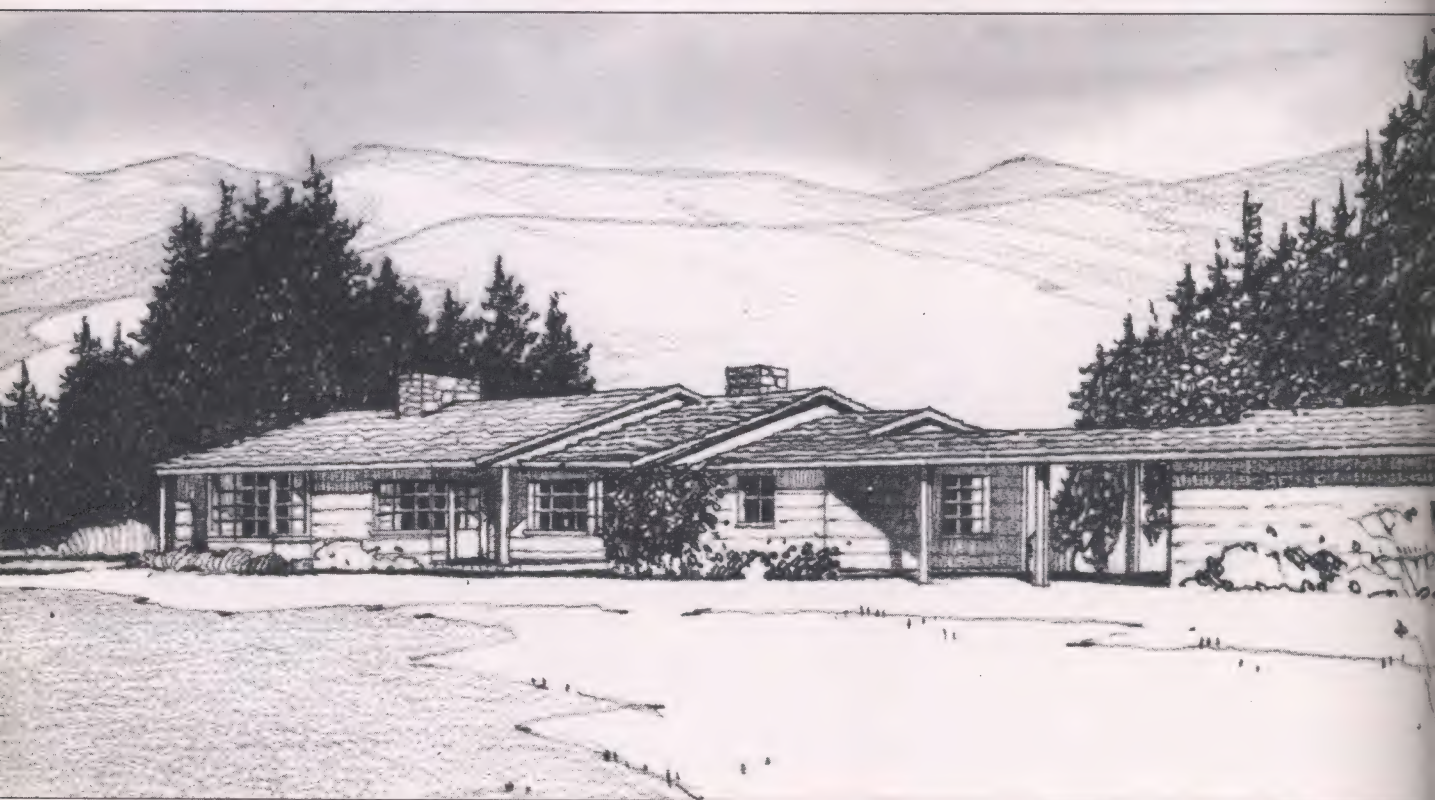
The illustration above is of the stable and tack room located about 200 feet from the house. At right are illustrations of dining-room patio and interior of den.







## Ranch-house background may be of forest, wheat field, or orange grove

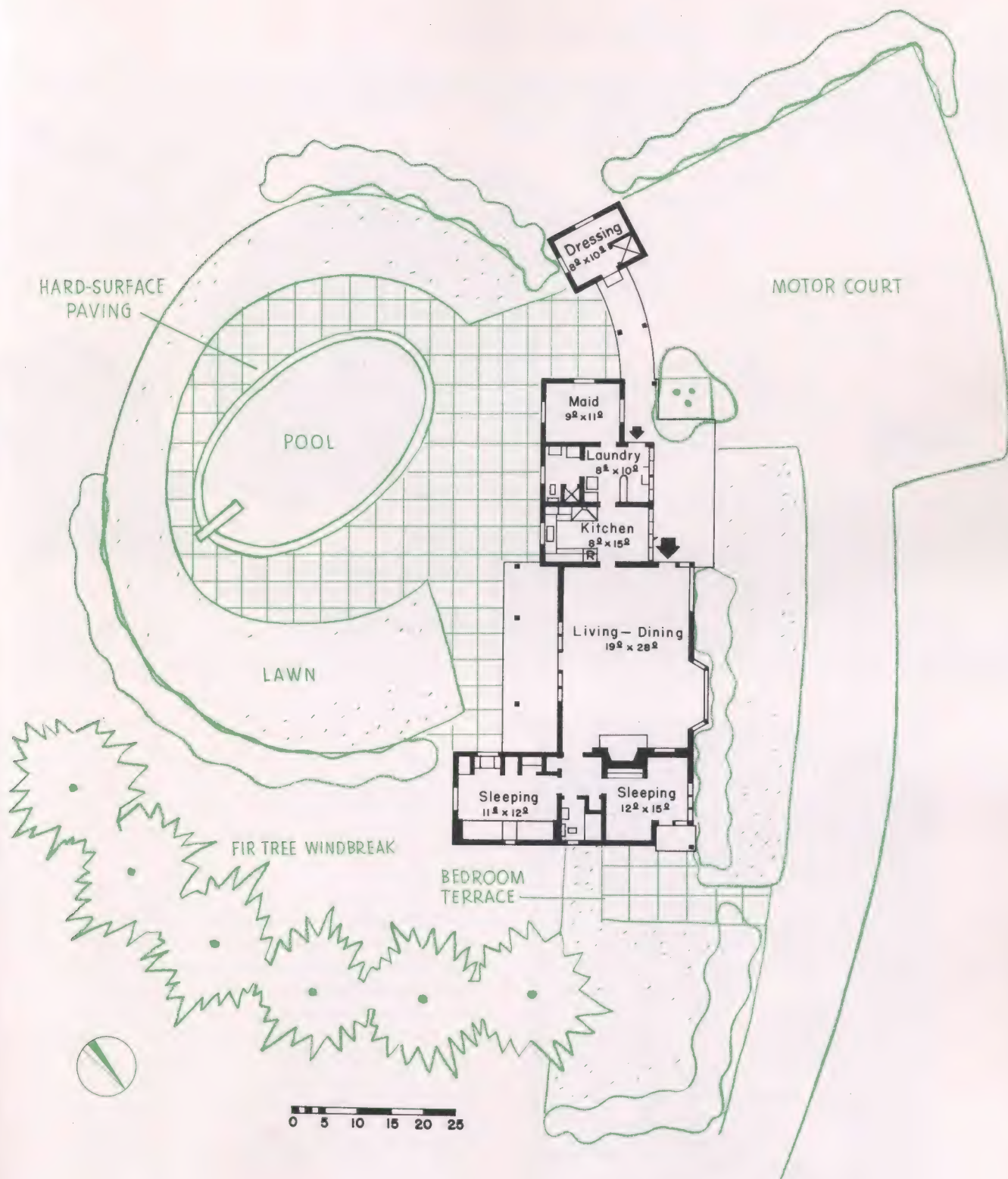


Not many years ago, natives of those sections of the United States where winter heating is a problem laughed when anyone mentioned the ranch house. How could anyone be so foolish as to think of a house that spreads and rambles all over the site? How could you heat such a house with a central heating plant?

But zone heating changed some ideas and the dictates of the site changed other prejudices, and ranch houses (the western colonials) grew in the territories of the eastern colonials.

This ranch house, with its back to a forest of fir and cedar, and a view of Puget Sound and the Olympics, does not seem out of place. With its cedar-shake roof, rubble-stone chimneys, cedar-shake and board walls, knotty-cedar interiors, it obviously follows the old ranch-house tradition of building with materials at hand.







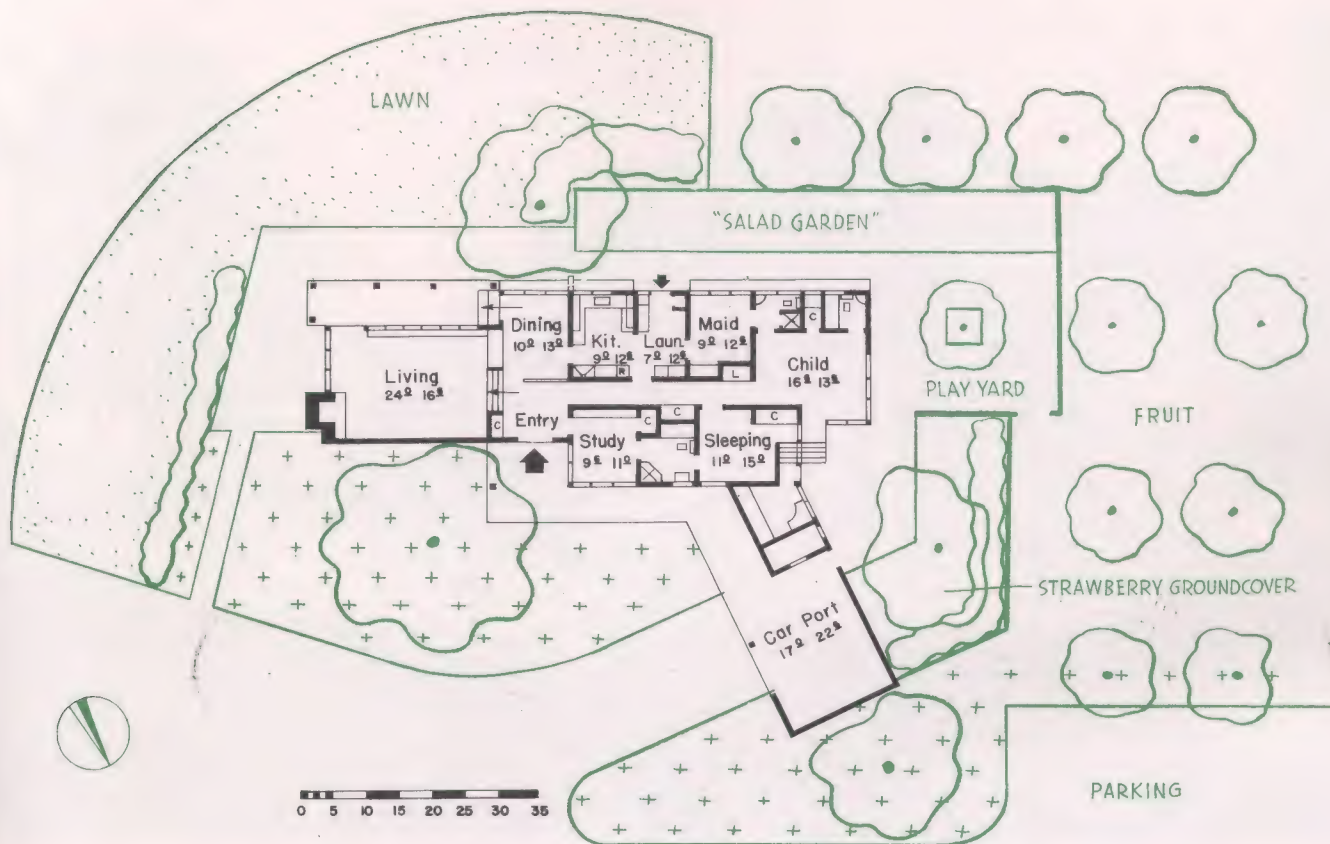
## Glass, solid walls, oak trees



Although glass is used freely throughout this modern house, it does not seem out of place in its old California setting. Rambling through an almond grove on a hilltop site, it definitely reflects the spirit of Spanish California. The high masonry wall is a contributing factor. Living room and living garden are cut off from the road by this wall, which then drops its architectural function and continues as a garden wall.

Noteworthy in the plan are the provisions for many variations in the standard pattern of living. The room off the main entrance can serve as an office for those who must receive business callers at home.





The living room is isolated from the rest of the house, thus avoiding any traffic through the room. There is convenient access to the outdoor terrace from the dining room. Children's room is provided with access to the play area without going through the house. Free use of glass in living, dining, and children's room brings the outdoors in.

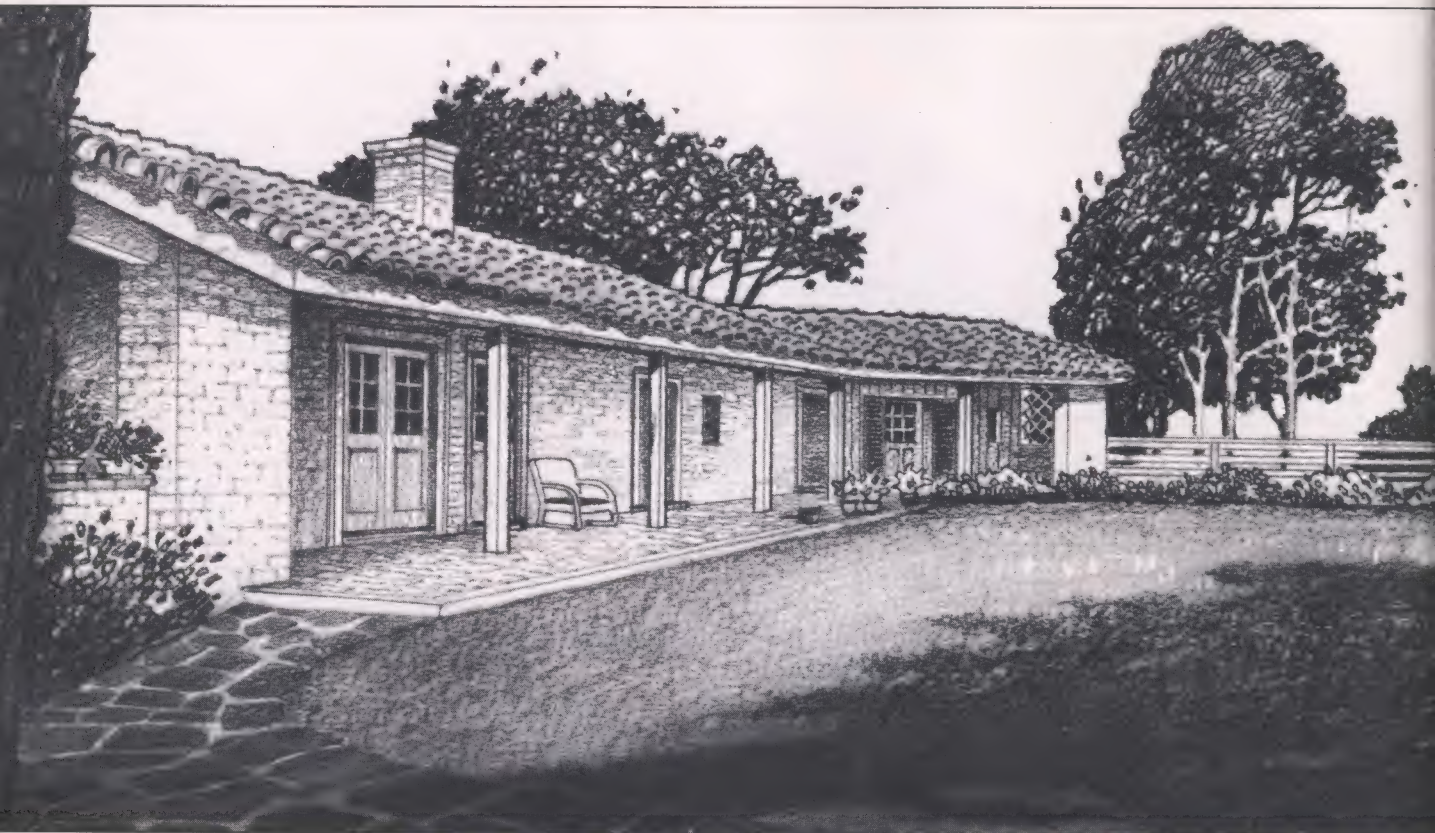
Some claim that the ranch house should be just one room wide. However, the real test is not in the width of the house but in whether the rooms of the house work with the outdoor rooms. Here, the living room, dining room, and bedrooms all have outdoor extensions. There is no closing-in of rooms due to close arrangement

with other rooms. The house, therefore, earns the right to be called a ranch house. Regardless of its setting or site, it will give smooth living, informal living, indoor-outdoor living.

In selecting homes for this book of ranch houses, we have made no attempt to interpret the term ranch literally or to give it the definition of an architectural form. In common usage of the term we have allowed it to define almost any house that takes advantage of the possibility of indoor-outdoor living and is not definitely marked by a tradition style symbol. It is true that our measuring stick is elastic, but it does not vary on one requirement — the house must live like a ranch house to be called a ranch house.



## That “place in the country”

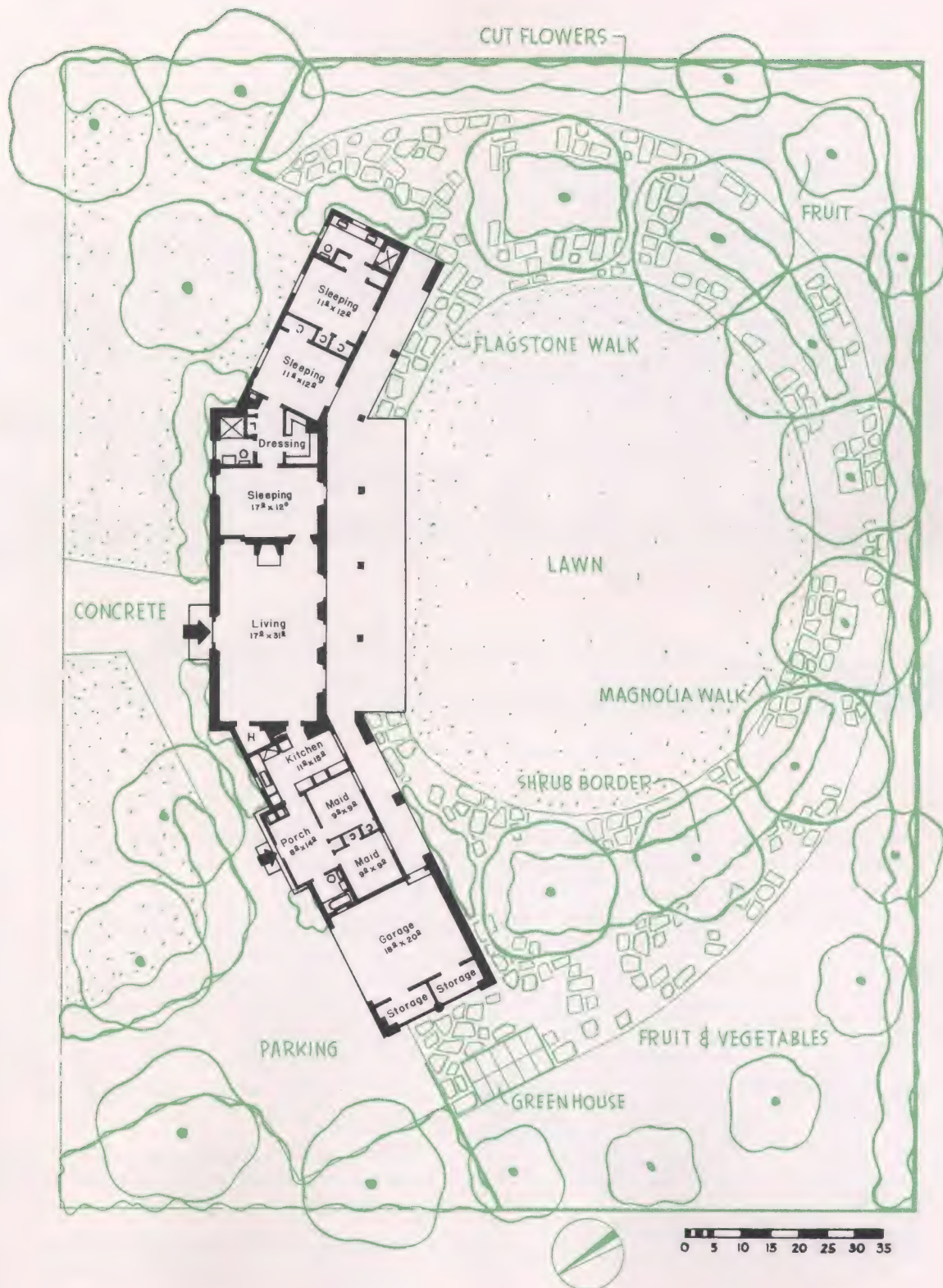


Homebuilders who carefully consider the resale value of the house they build have a strong preference for the ranch house. It has lived through every fad of style and house design and yet shows no signs of becoming dated. Of course, the reason for its timelessness is in the fact that most people who build a ranch house are seeking livability above all else. And livability doesn't go out of style.

The landscape plan creates a picture garden and strolling area that is attractive in and out of season. When the trees lose their leaves, they still hold their form and, with the broad flagstone path, maintain the design of the garden. Area for vegetable and flower planting is outside the circle and provides additional interest to the garden tour.









## On a hillside contour



That a hillside contour can be widened is a fact every ranch-house builder should keep in mind. Ranch houses do need level sites. The livability of the house depends upon ground-level floors



and terraces. The movement in and out of the house should not have the restriction and hazard of steps at the doorways.

This ranch house is built on a hill. In fact, the house tends to follow the contour of the hill. But the contour has been widened and the house is on level ground. As in most good ranch houses, the "front" and "back" are reversible. The large illustration above shows the side opposite the entrance, so it actually should be called the "back."

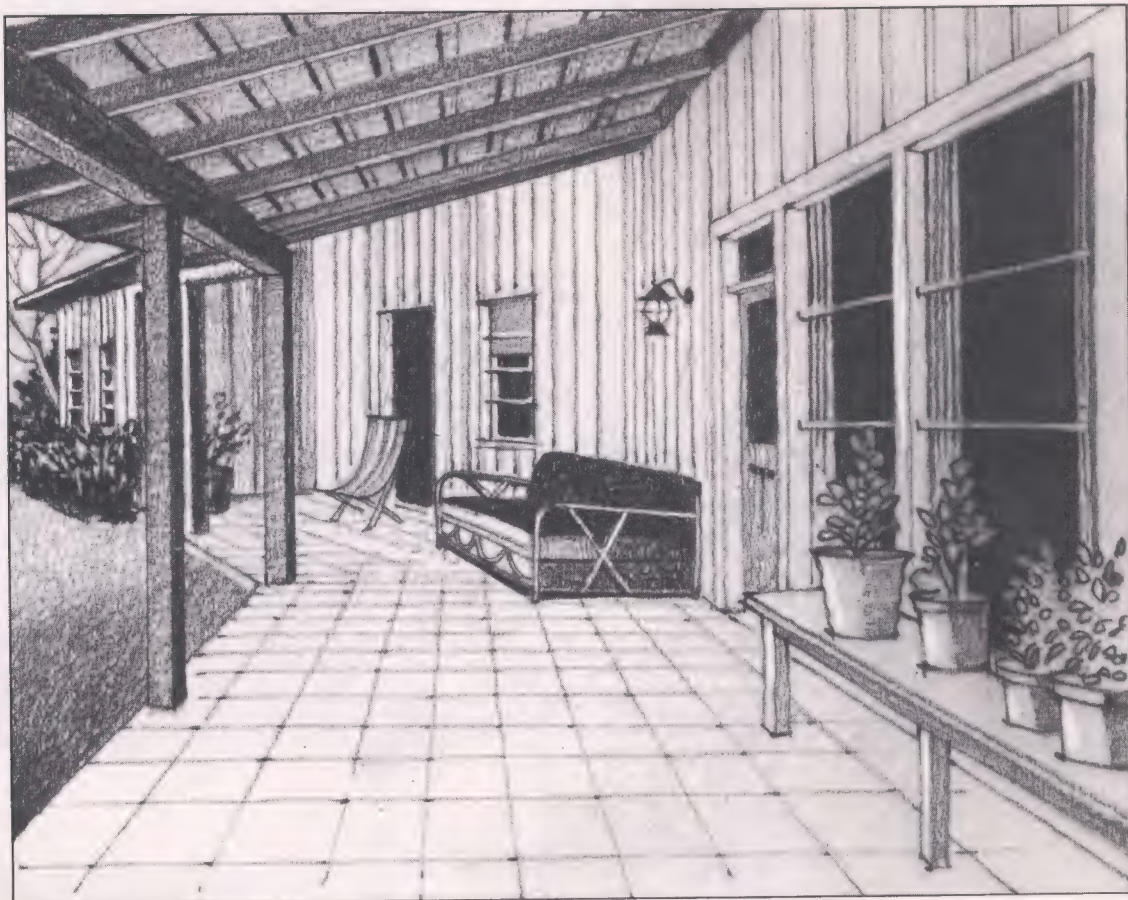
Where there is no street, the need for a "front" disappears, and you start looking for the living that the house might give you.

Landscape plan does not agree with actual arrangement. Fence is suggested to enclose a serv-



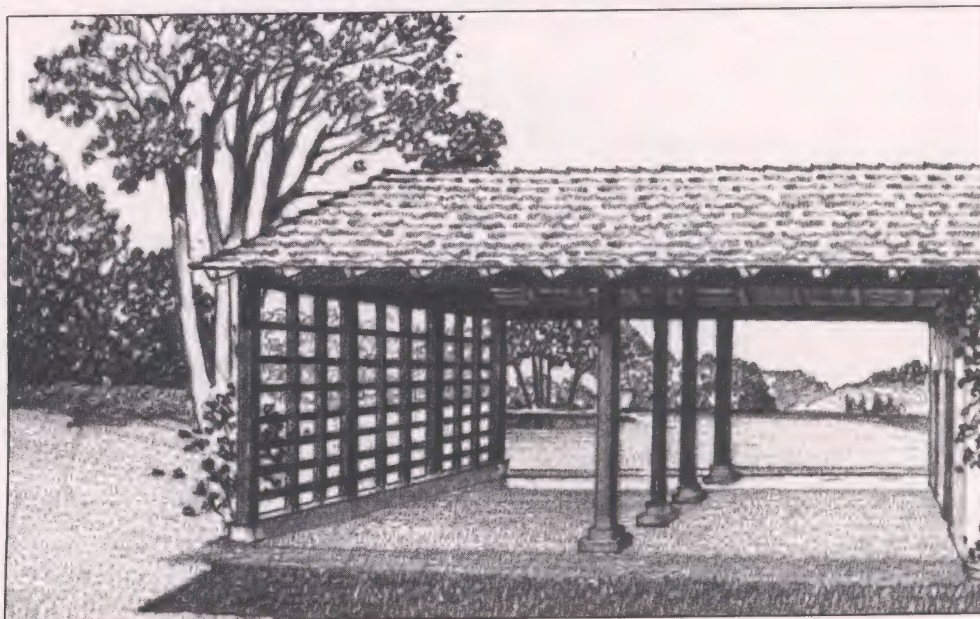






ice yard and stop the view through the open car shelter.  
Kitchen-dining room, living room, and bed-

room all have access to the wide porch. The porch is the view room, sometimes the sunroom, and occasionally the outdoor dining room.





## Space and budgets

If the feeling of spaciousness is important to your way of living and you can afford to use space generously in both house and land, the ranch house will serve you well. In fact, the rambling character of the ranch house not only increases the use of space around it, but also tends optically to enlarge the total space.

This factor of space use is important if you are going to build on a limited budget.

The size of homes generally has decreased as building costs have increased. Most of the ranch house forms have been adaptable to shrinkage when necessary, except the Monterey type. Obviously, the two-story house of any style cannot be contracted beyond a certain minimum. When the house budget will permit no more than 1200 square feet, for example, the two-story Monterey is out of the question. Furthermore, much of the appeal of the Monterey is in its spacious proportions.

When you are planning a small ranch house, it is helpful to analyze what has happened to houses generally under the economic pressure of the past. The *maid's room* started to fall out of small house plans during the last depression. The separate *dining room* gradually faded out with the maid, in many instances, and became a part of the living room. Now, the *kitchen* is often an alcove in the living room. The *den*, too, was absorbed into the living room. The *guest room* is hidden in the living-room couches. The *laundry* is in the kitchen . . . We save space through the multiple use of space.

While it is true that the real needs of living can be satisfied better in well-planned minimum space than in poorly planned large space, the loss of space should not be regarded as beneficial to our way of living.

Luxurious living needs more, rather than less, space. The truth of this statement is not contradicted by the fact that by removing partitions, by combining room uses, by intelligent use of glass, architects have been able to give us an illusion of more space as the actual space decreased. The fact that we have found out how

to increase the livability of space by losing it does not make space less desirable.

Right now there seems to be a good chance that such planning will be implemented by low-cost building methods, and we shall produce a minimum house that is more livable and comfortable than any minimum house we have known thus far.

From what we have seen of ranch houses, we believe that they provide the best opportunity for luxury space, even in the minimum-cost, simple-living bracket.

In this book you will find plans for minimum-space houses. Some of the plans are of houses built 10 years ago and others are of houses yet to be built, but all of them prove that the ranch house is modern-minded in room planning and future-minded in space planning.

Inherent in the ranch house form are many devices for adding living space without adding cost in the same proportion. The wide porch or *corredor* can be built at a fraction of the cost of the house proper. The covered passageway connecting garage to house, or house to garden structure, is a low-cost project. In short, in the ranch house, livable space can be extended far beyond the walls of the house at relatively low cost. When the minimum house is a ranch house, there is less denial of the luxury of space.

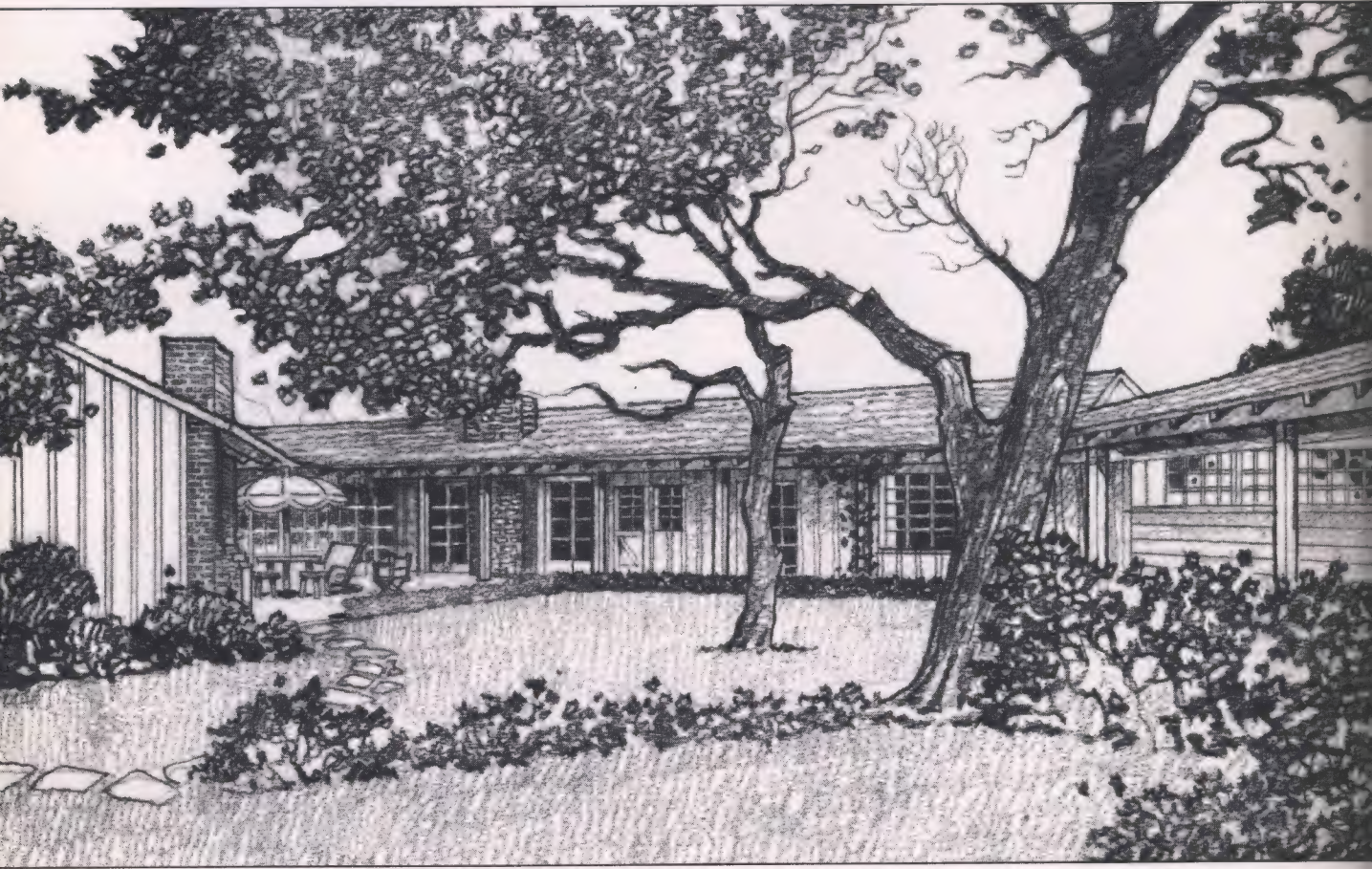
When building a ranch house, you have the opportunity of building into your home and garden, as an *integral part* of your home, the garden room, guest house, greenhouse, barbecue room which so often are inconveniently *added* to the conventional box house.

The ranch house plan makes these rooms a part of your home without enclosing them in the walls of the house. Therefore, if the original plan is right, the home can be built in installments without sacrifice in cost or final plan.

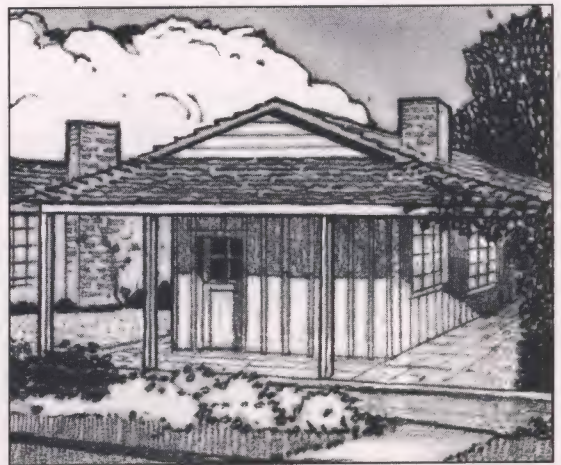
The possibilities of getting more space for living by the invention of low-cost space in direct connection with the house are worth careful study by every home builder.



## It's easy to expand the ranch house

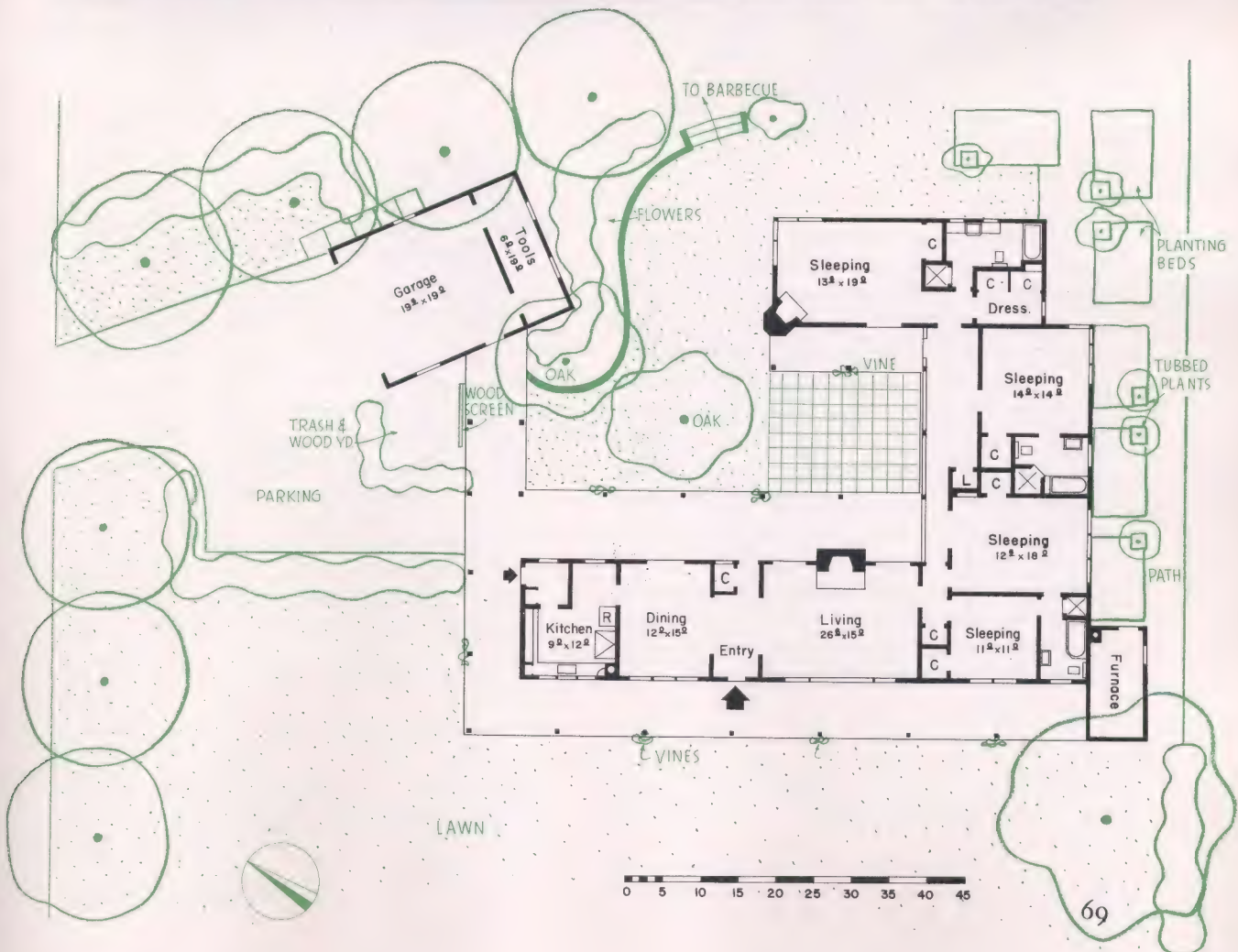
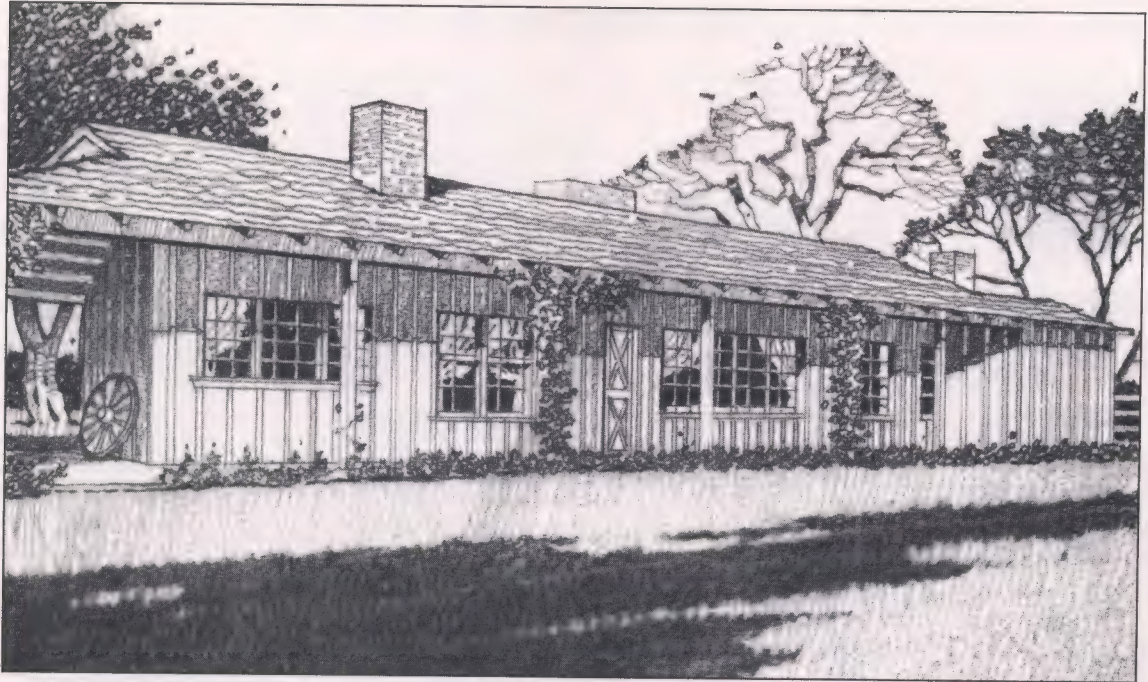


The ease with which the ranch house can be enlarged is universally accepted as an advantageous factor of the ranch house form. It is probably true that almost any plan can be enlarged without undue expense if the future addition is planned at the time of first construction. However, the rambling nature of the ranch house permits inexpensive additions without careful pre-planning for the addition. If, for example, the usual wall-to-wall addition of the bedroom wing would shut out light or call for an expensive hallway in the ordinary house plan, the addition could be made to the ranch house by adding the room or wing as an independent unit and connecting it with the original house by a covered passage. In many of the ranch houses of today, the old covered passage or outdoor hallway has been transformed into a gallery or glassed-in passageway.



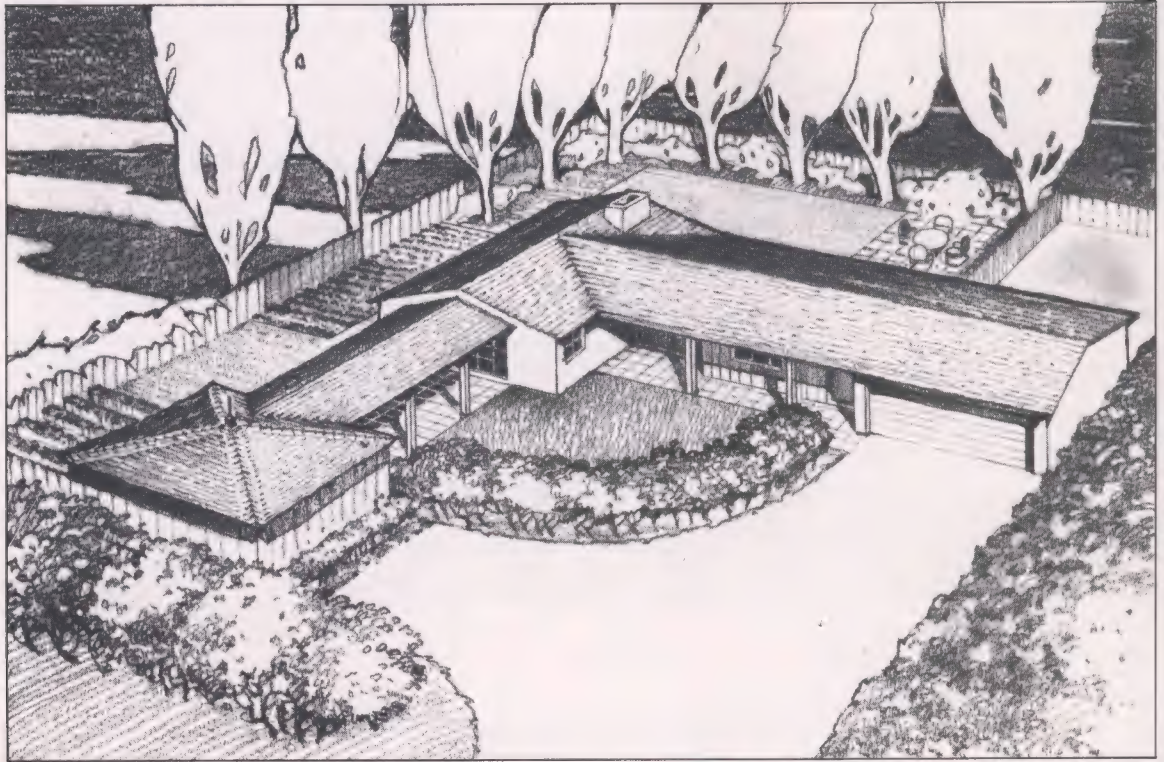
The house shown here has grown by addition. The new bedroom wing is connected by a hallway that also serves as a glassed-in porch. Note how the additions form a well-protected patio.



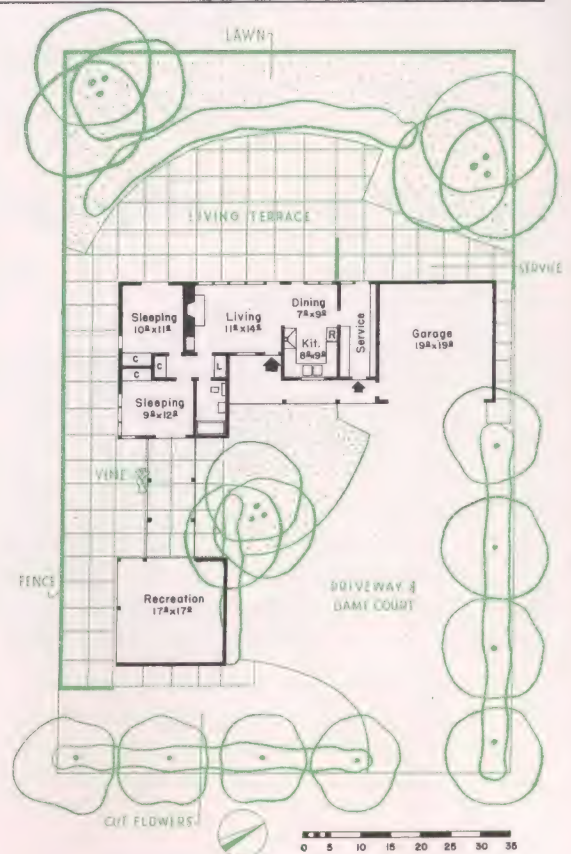




## The covered passageway adds living space

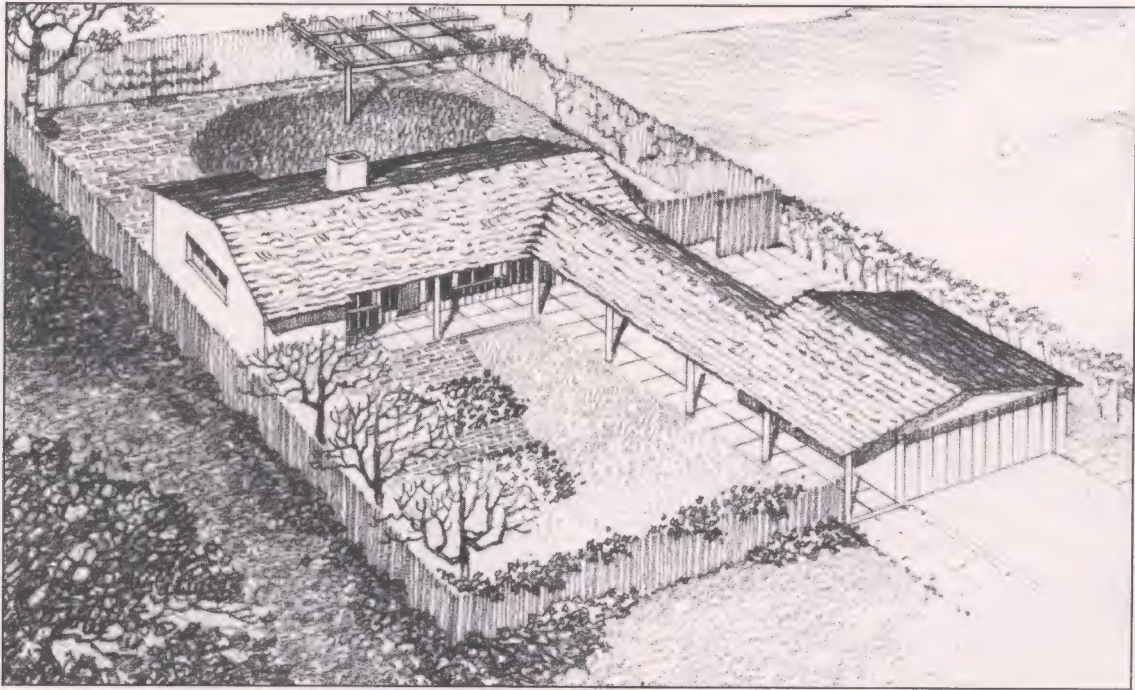


Every homeowner recognizes the value of a livable porch. If he has taken the trouble to investigate cost figures, he knows that the cost of porch space is less than half that of the house area. A covered passageway is more than a porch turned from its position alongside a house and extended at right angles to it. Furthermore, it can be added to the living scheme without changing the appearance of the house or the amount of light in the house proper. There is no reason why the roof of the covered passageway shouldn't be glass or lath if the owner wishes to use part of the passageway for the cultivation of special flowers. And, if further shelter from wind or rain is desired, glass or fabric panels can be added to enclose one side.





# Apartment on the ground

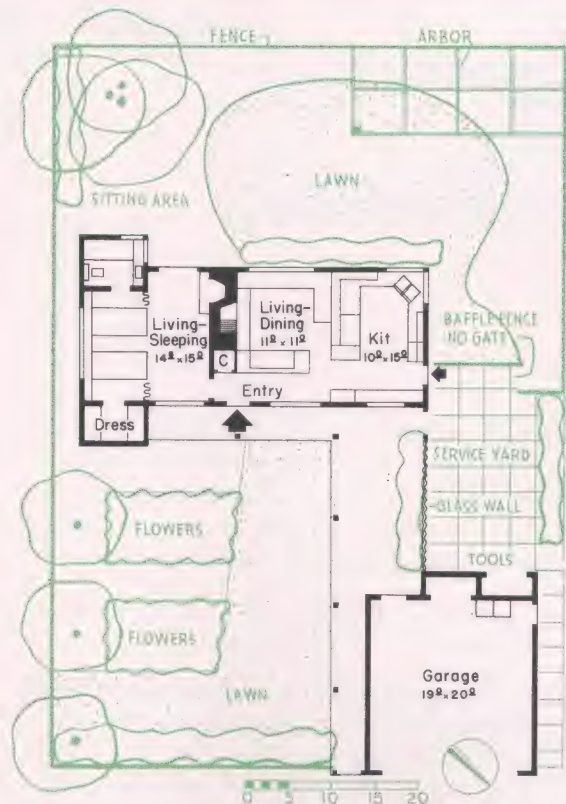


Is a two- or three-room house anything new or different? Certainly it needs no explanation or excuse to the apartment dweller. The only new thing about such a house is its name.

What too many apartment house people and house builders seem to forget is that the living advantage of a house over that of an apartment is that the first is on the ground and the second is in the air. Few of them think about the land or the sun when they place two (or five) rooms on a lot. They forget that living can be extended beyond the walls of rooms.

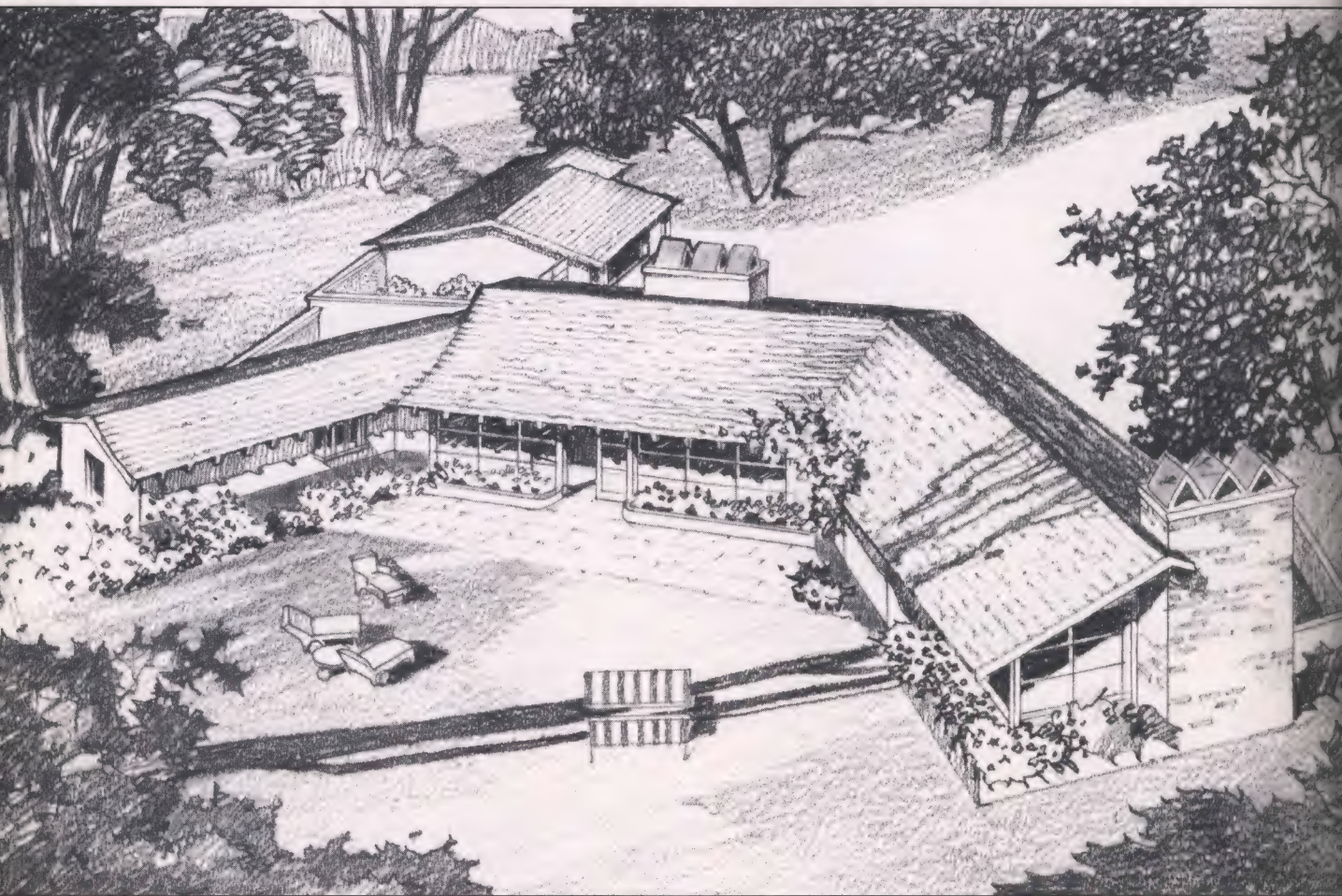
This house (better call it an apartment) contains, in one room, space for kitchen, dining, and living functions. The division is only a semi-partition high enough to hide the kitchen equipment from the view of anyone seated in the dining-living portion of the room.

In addition, a sunny, warm area on the rear side, a cool area on the entrance side, and a utility area by the garage are the extensions that give more living than off-the-ground apartments ever have.





## Ranch house on a half acre



Full advantage of the size of this site is taken to create a clear and distinct division between sleeping areas, living-entertaining space, and work-utility area. Invariably, such a plan results in a smooth-working, free-and-easy house.

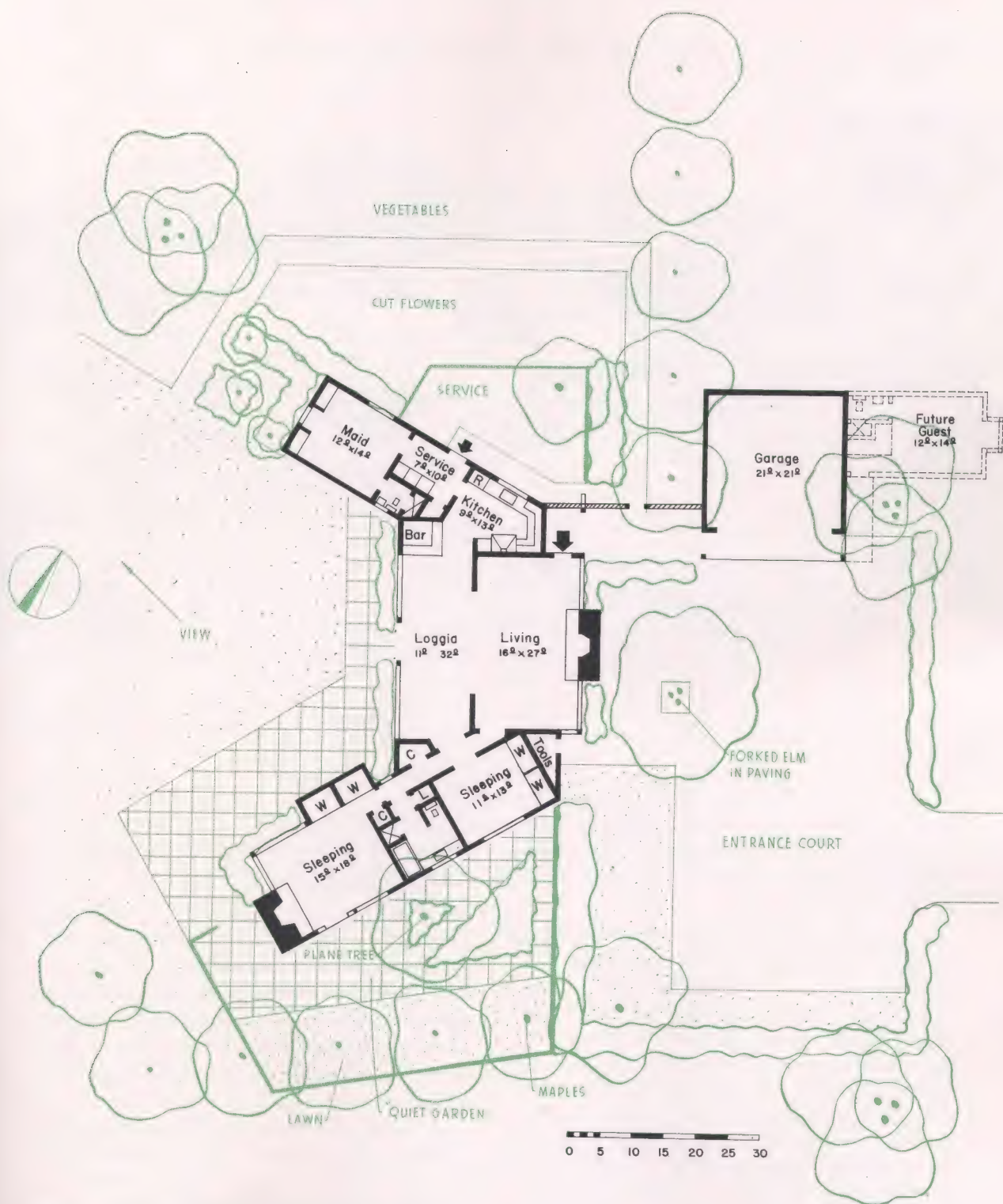
The clear definition in inside space is repeated in the division of outdoor space.

Note, for example, how the terrace surrounding the bedroom wing has been planned. The advantage of bringing the terrace out from the end of the bedroom wing and connecting front and rear terraces is often overlooked.

A terrace integrated with the rest of the place establishes definite limits and restricts movement. When terraces turn corners, they invite exploration and add interest.

The expandability of the living room and the absence of dining room add to the informal atmosphere of the house. Sliding doors divide the living room from the glassed-in or screened loggia. The loggia's outside glass windows are removable and interchangeable with screens so that the living area can be changed with the weather. The bar is so located that it can be used as a breakfast bar. Kitchen is part of loggia.





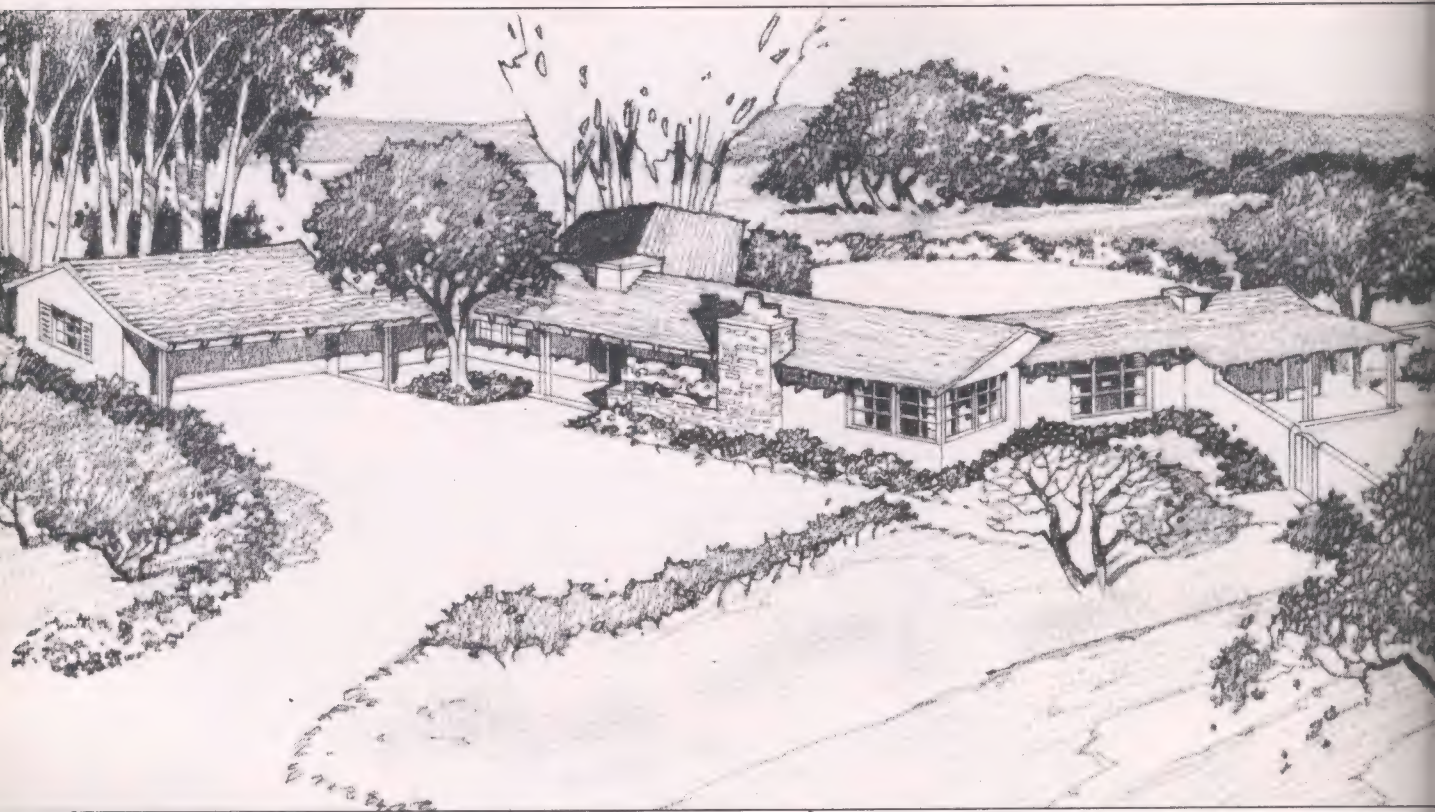
Note the outdoor planting pockets adjoining the bedroom. Viewed from the inside, the small garden appears to be a part of the room.

The possibility of expansion is provided in the plan. The covered passageway leading to the

garage will give connection with the future room. This same passageway, with its louvered side, gives a protected entrance from the garage and, at the front-door end, also serves as an entry hall.



## Five-room house with a big-ranch look



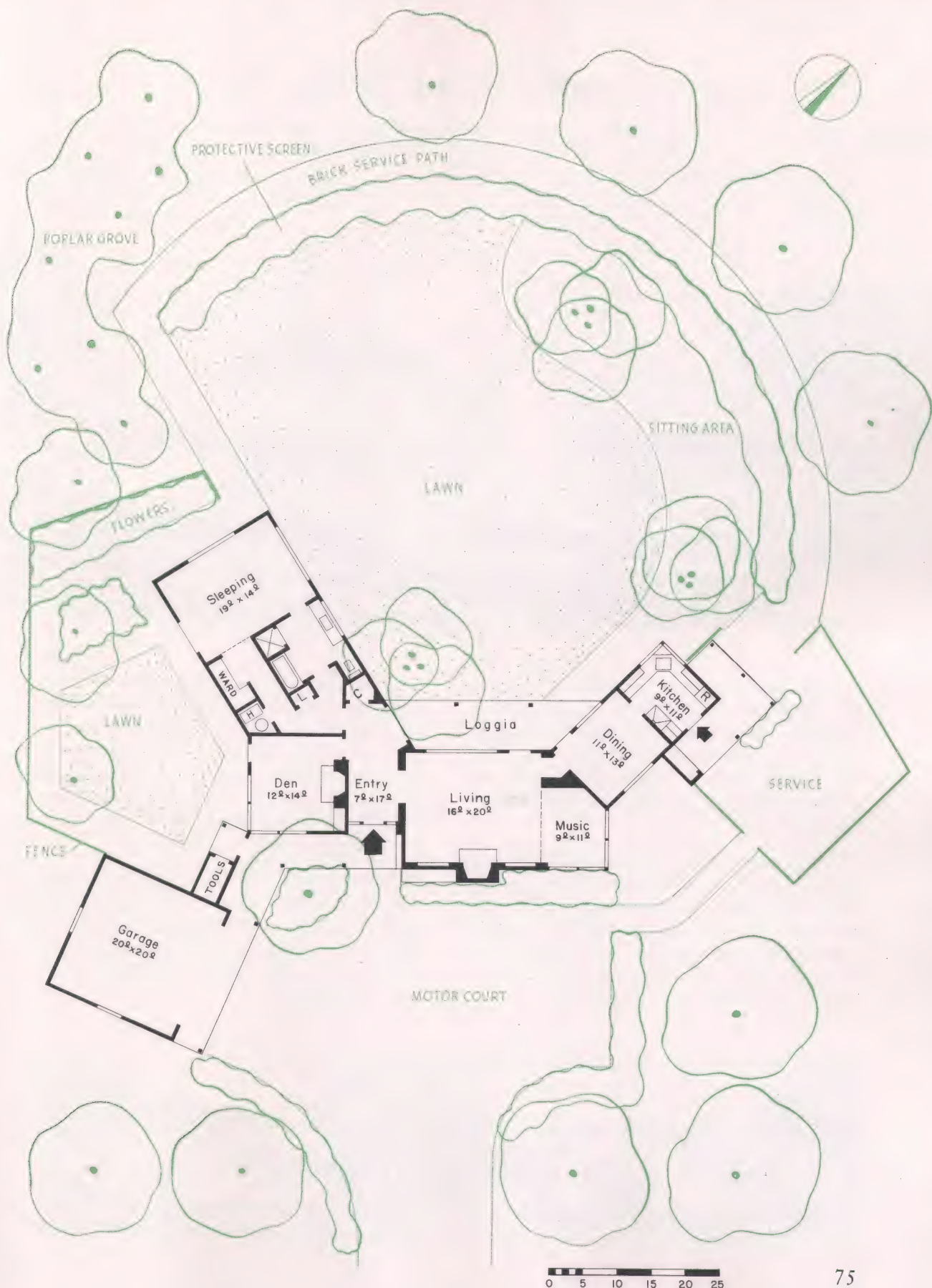
Here's one way to build spaciousness into the small house. The one extravagance over almost minimum cost is the placement of the house on a double lot.

A study of the plan shows how use of space was developed, and suggests future possibilities. The bedroom and the room labeled "den" (which can be converted into a bedroom) are much bigger rooms because of the two patios. The size of the lot permits a wide variety of outdoor rooms. The entrance and entrance court, the bedroom patio, the living patio, the area beyond the main patio—each offers its background for a special experience. Living in and around this house can be as varied as anyone could hope for.

Suggested by the plan is the opportunity of adding various garden structures to take care of expansive summer living.

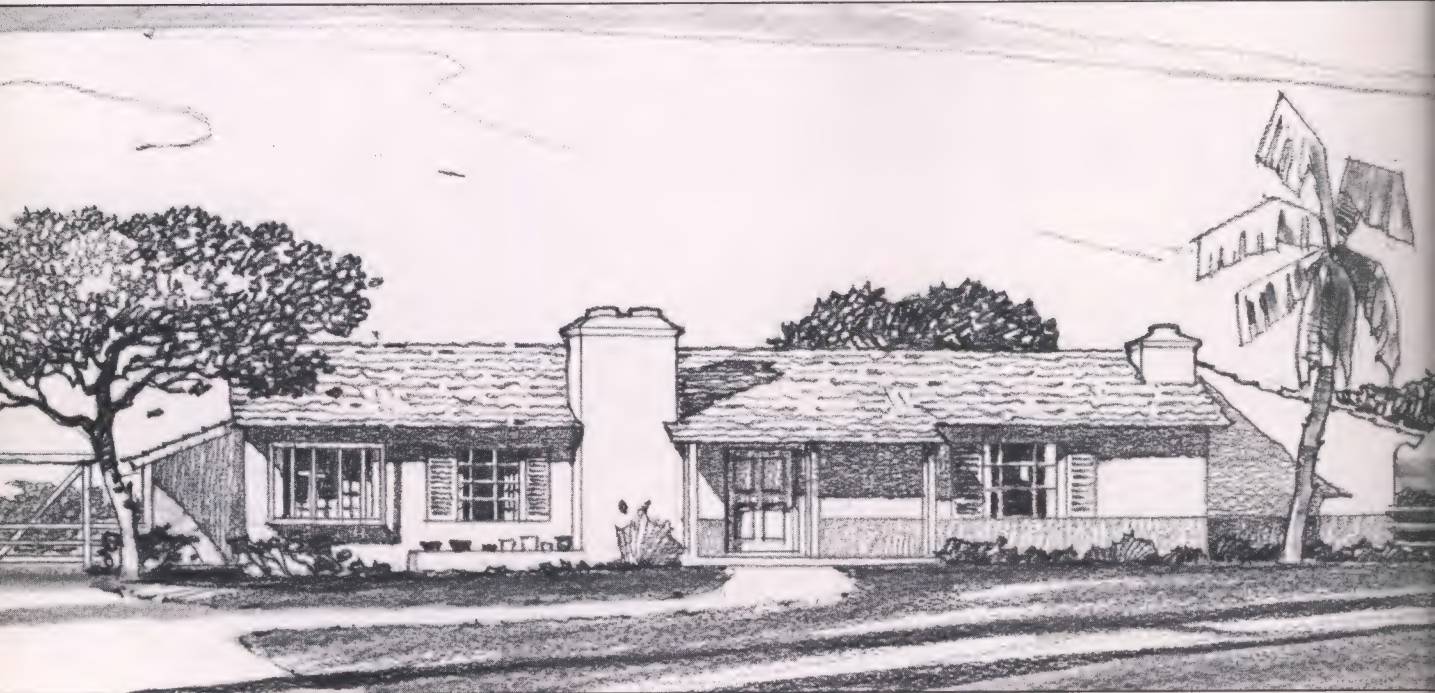
Only the basic framework of the landscape plan is worked out. If the homeowners were ardent gardeners, there would be vines, chosen for their fragrance, trained on the bedroom-patio wall; pots and tubs would stand along the base of the wall. A second tool house would be built at the corner outside the patio wall, and a large lathhouse would enclose a barbecue-picnic room at the rear of the lot. Planting along the circular walk would be so varied that a stroll from the loggia around the path and into the bedroom patio would be a garden tour.







# How to get country living in the city

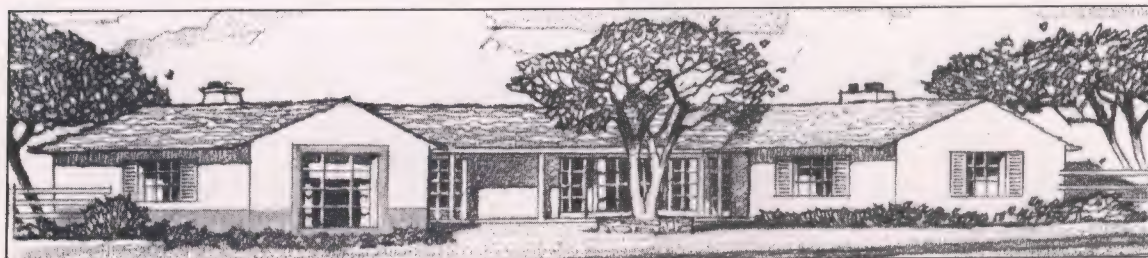


Gardens within gardens, secret garden rooms, tool sheds, even hidden pools can be arranged so that a tour of the garden is an exploration. Thus, some of the sense of adventure that made the old farmstead an imaginative land can be recreated within the confines of two or three city lots.

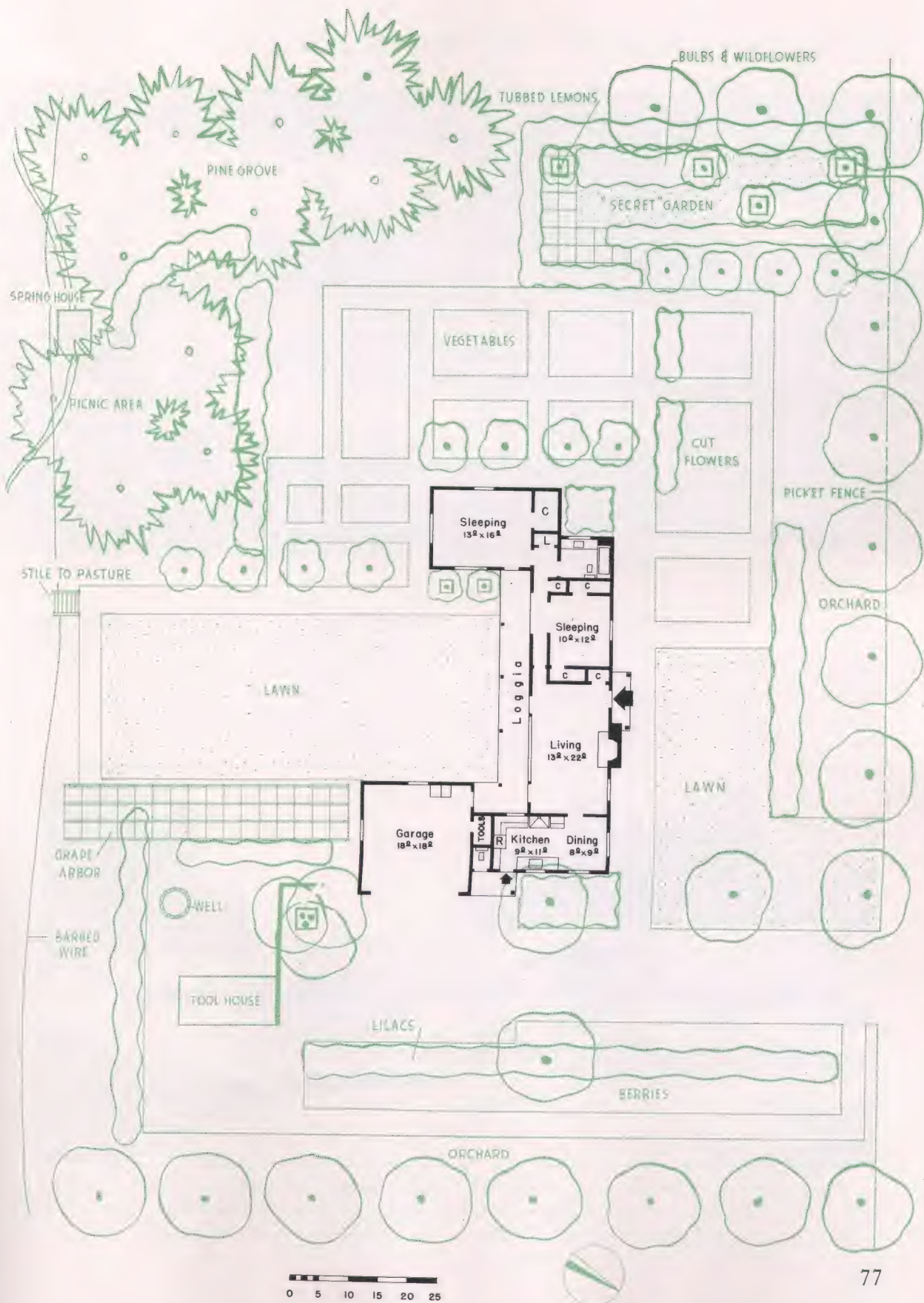
The plan suggests one way to get variety and surprise. The picnic area could be completely hidden. This spot would be ideal for a circle of redwoods. The secret garden might be anything — probably something the owners enjoy very much but has short blooming season. Raised beds allow more variety in less space.

When the city dweller dreams about country living, his thoughts go back to some old farmstead he knew as a boy. The house itself was unimportant. The well, the berry patch, the fenced-in vegetable garden, the spring house, the tool shed with its grindstone, the stile into the pasture, the nettles, the dusty path — these are the symbols of “the country.”

To recreate these symbols in the city is to lose them. But the spirit of the country place can be caught in the city, if the planner accepts the obstacles of nostalgic memories as a part of the problem and builds variety and surprise into house and garden.

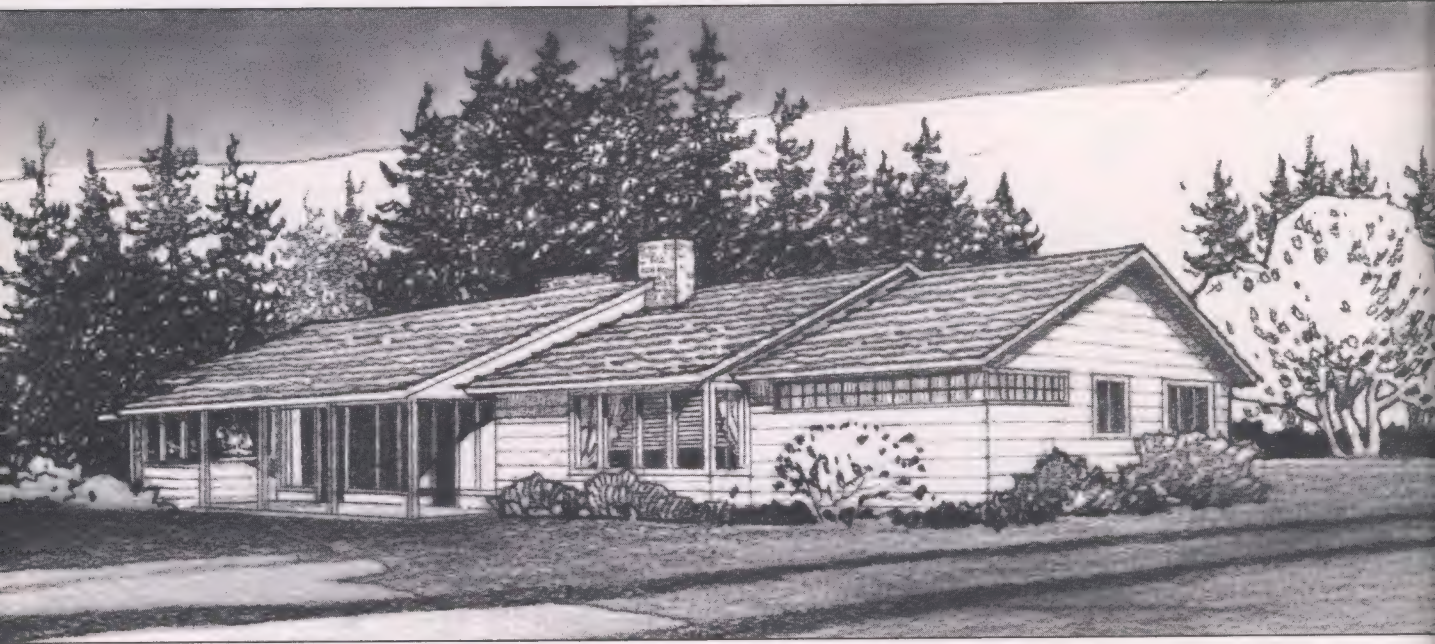








## Clean lines become the ranch house

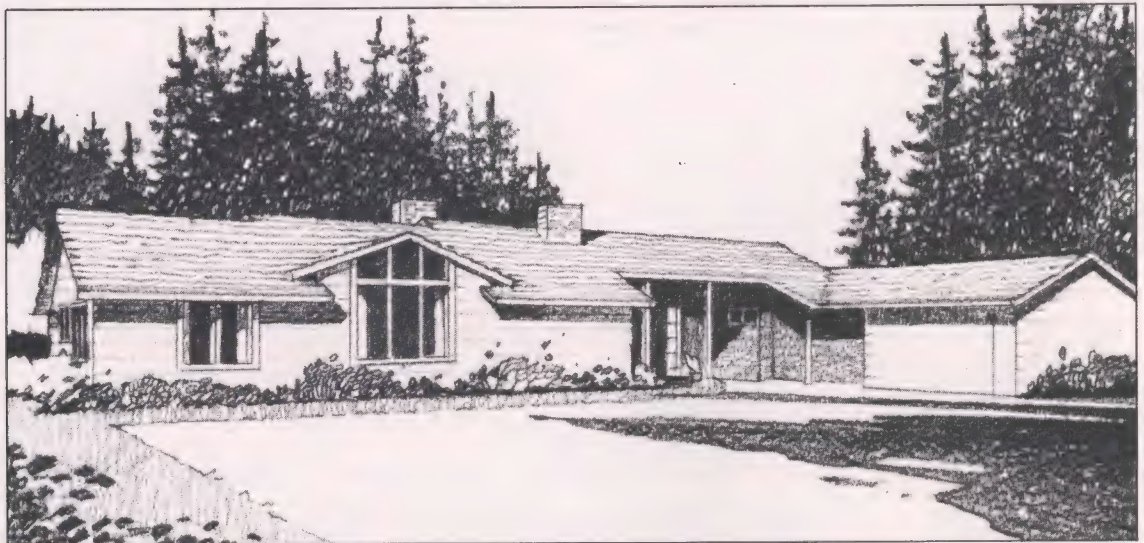


This house seems as much at ease among the evergreens of the Pacific Northwest as it would be in the brown hills of the desert.

Its plan divides itself into three definite areas—utility, social, and sleeping.

The utility area was arranged to group garage,

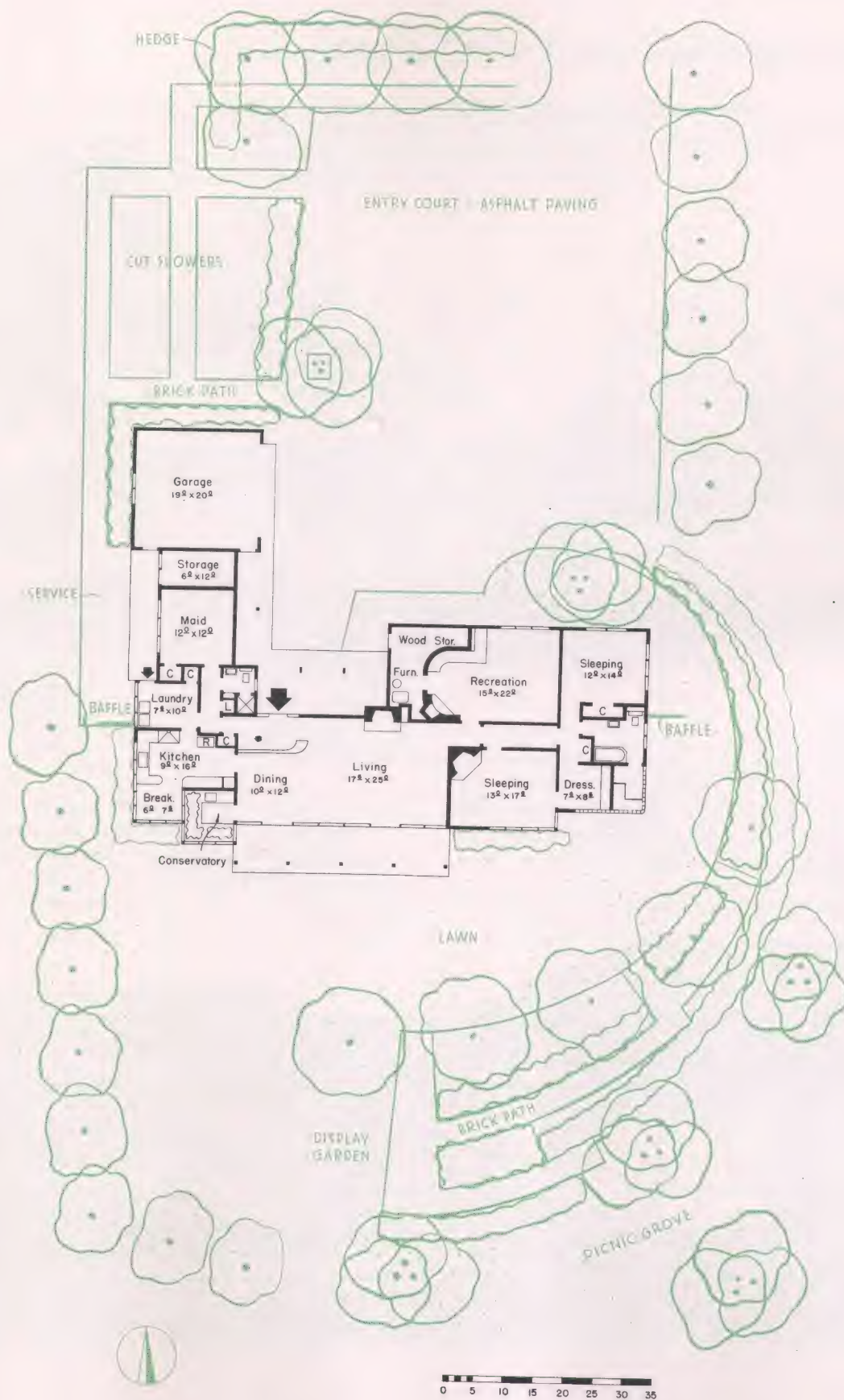
storage room, maid's apartment, laundry, and kitchen all at one end of the house. An unexpectedly pleasant touch is the conservatory, really a tiny greenhouse tucked in so that it can be seen from either the breakfast nook or dining part of the living room.



In a spread-out plan like this, it is often true that passage from one section to another means walking through in-between rooms. However,

such houses are usually built where doorbell-ringers are few and where a freer sort of living makes the objection a minor one.







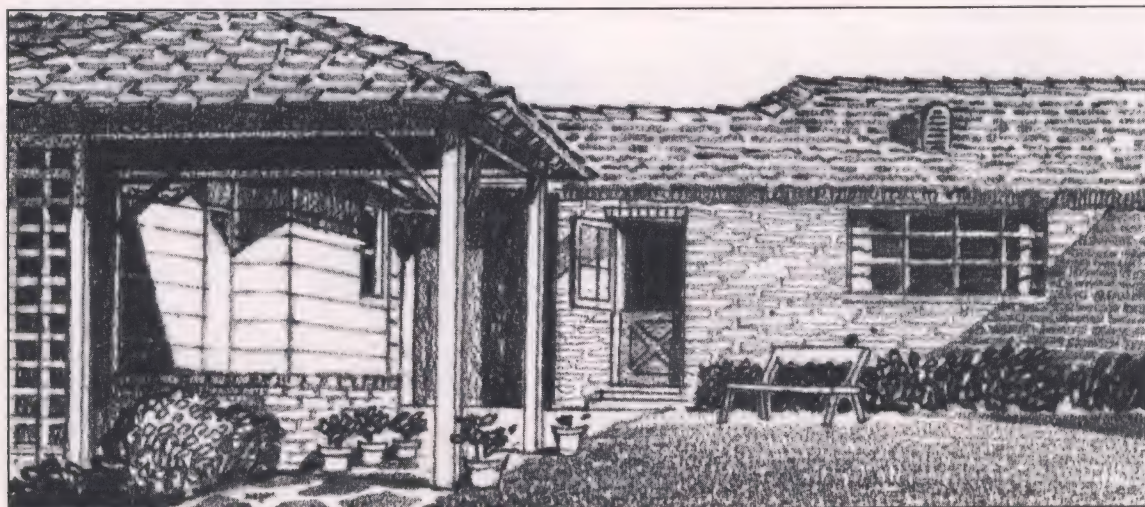
## Old materials used with simplicity



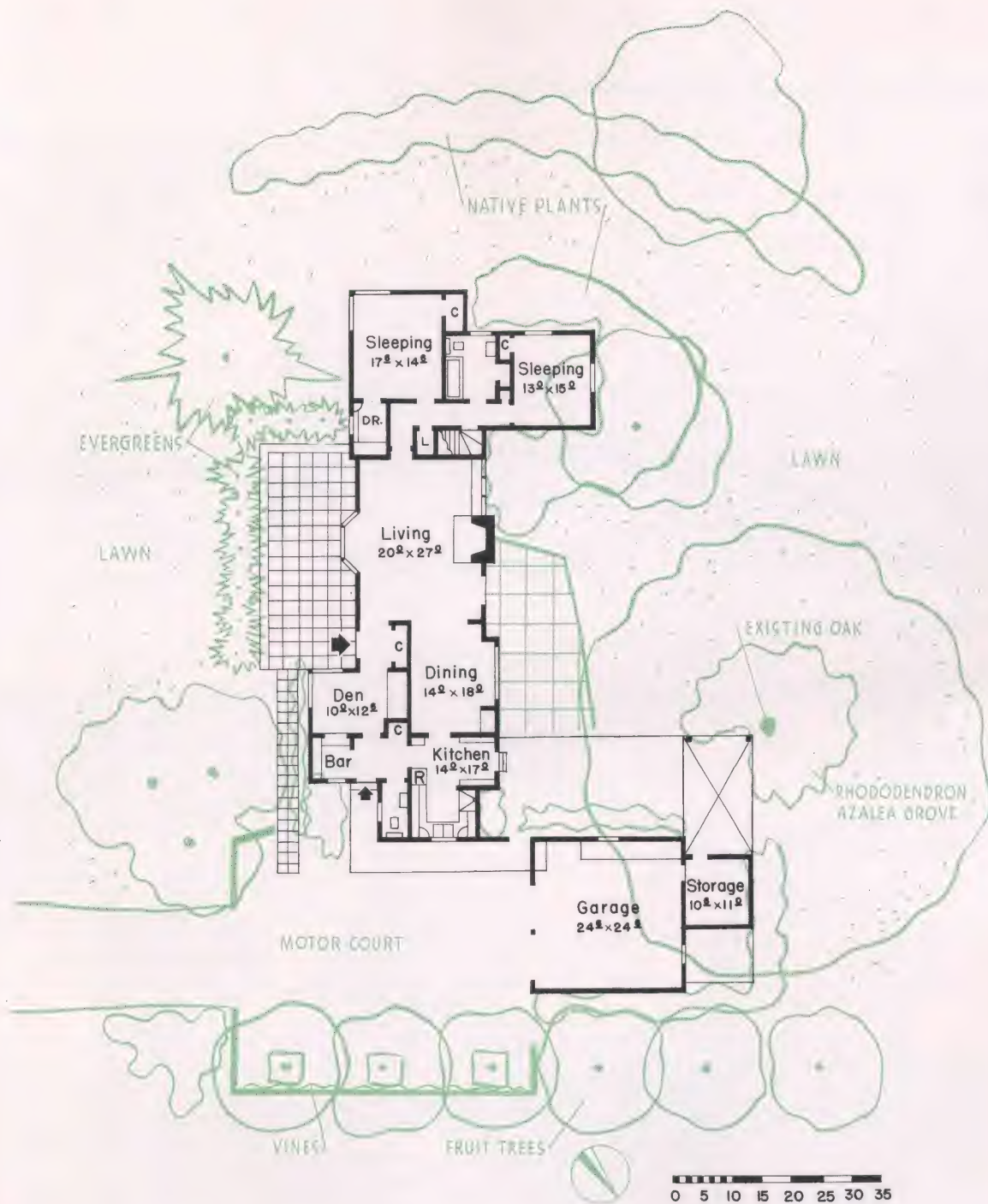
In this example, brick, redwood, and cedar shakes are brought together naturally and honestly to form a most livable small house.

Although the house is almost ten years old, the

plan is as modern as today. The location of the den immediately off the entrance takes care of occasional business callers without interfering with the household routine. If business turns social, the bar is right around the corner. The







dining alcove can be shut off from living room.

Protection is afforded outdoor living space in the rear by the garage and bedroom wings. Need for outdoor storage space is not forgotten.

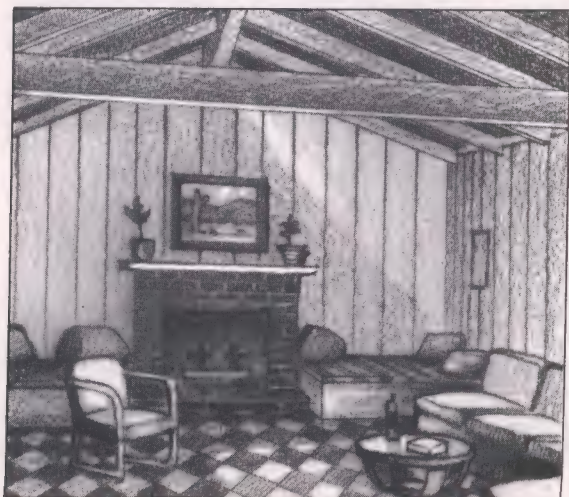
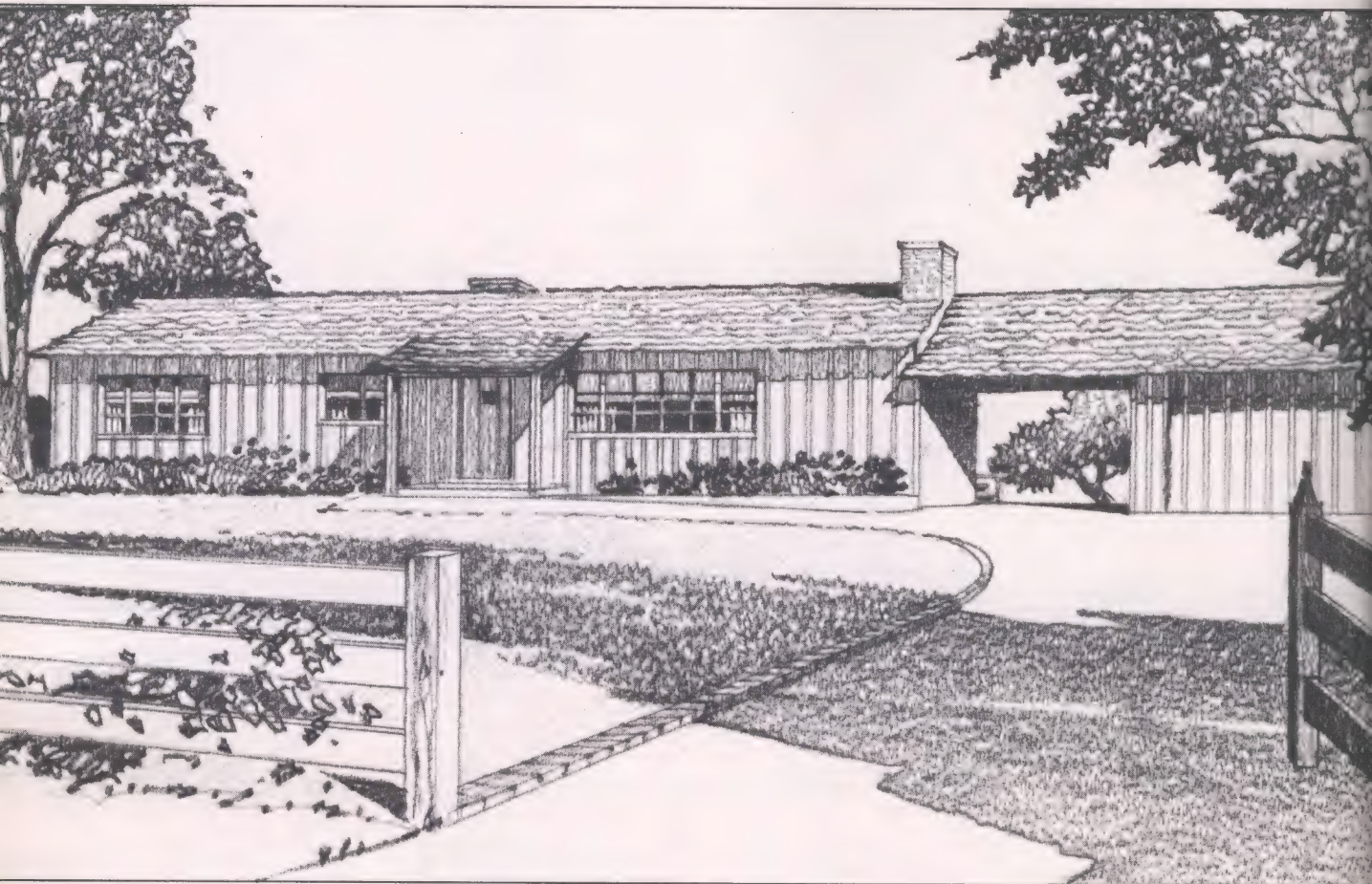
The large oak tree sets the theme for the landscape plan. The area roofed over is extended by

a terrace which connects it with the living room.

The overall plan has a controlled informality in keeping with the house. Eating facilities could be arranged under the porch alongside the garage. The sleeping wing of the house is surrounded by planting of shrubs and trees to make it a zone of quiet.



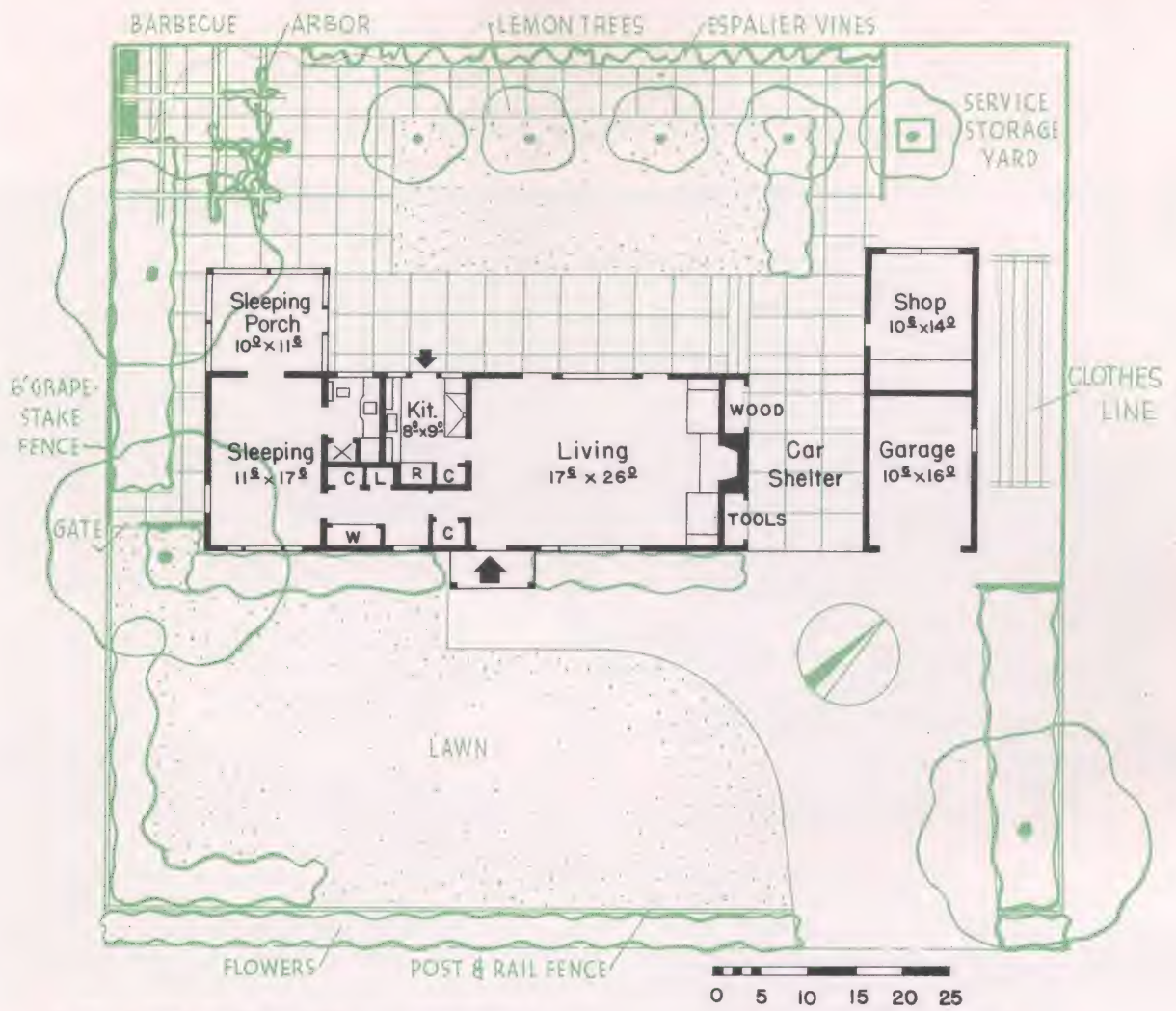
## Three-room house---all wood



Straightforward as the board and batten of its exterior, simple as an old barn, this little house offers unusual possibilities. The combination of bedroom and sleeping porch allows the bedroom to be furnished and used as a second living room. The canvas supported by pipe (see illustration at right) gives privacy to sun bathers. In the area now occupied by the grape arbor, a guest house could be built.

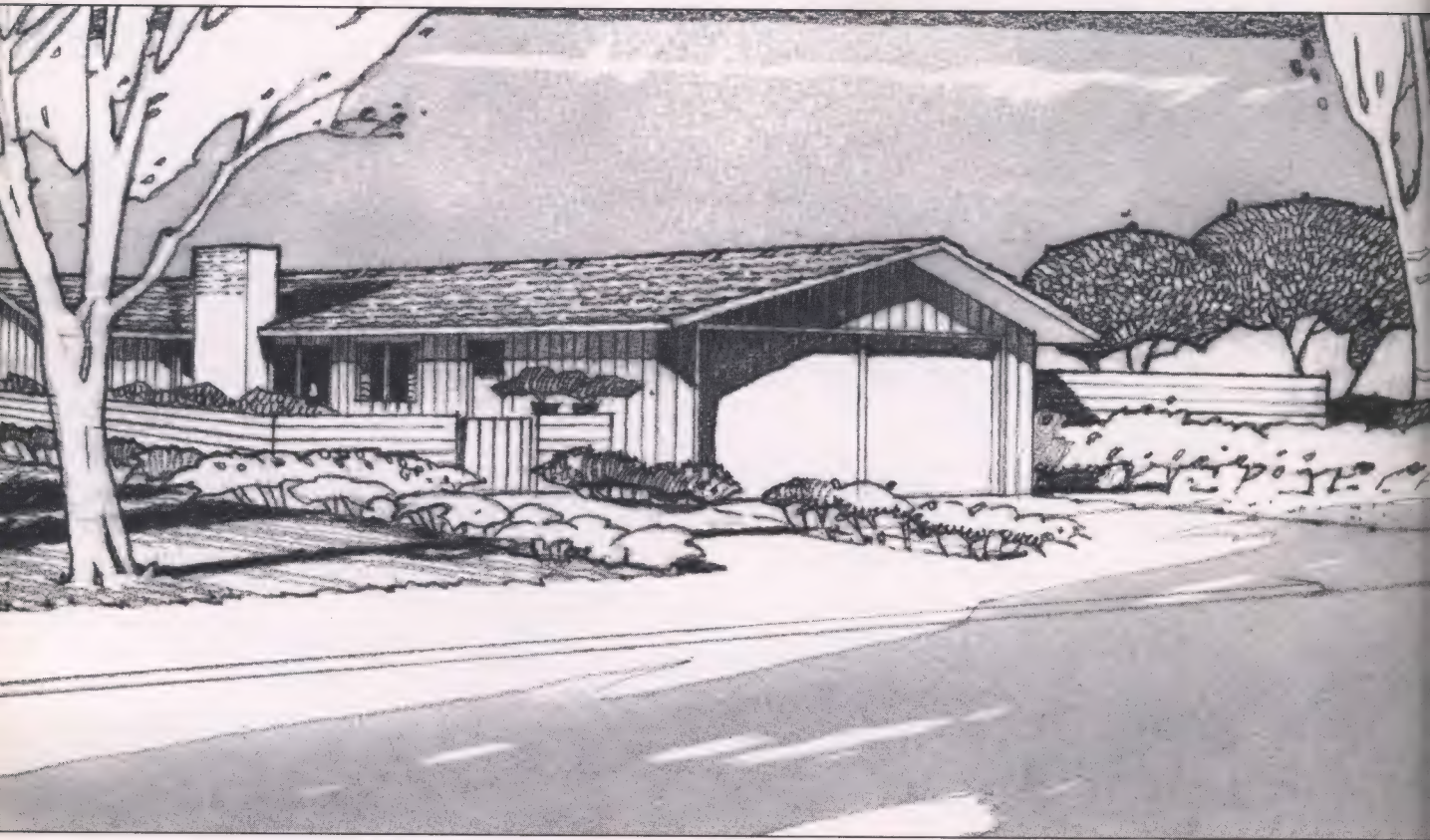
The open passageway provides a car shelter, in addition to the garage, at no more than roof cost. Closets built in here give needed, easily accessible storage space for lawn furniture and garden tools.







## Turn your living toward the sun



In this miniature house, the sun is under perfect control. A paved north terrace off the living room offers escape from heat in the shade of the house. The south terrace, for sunbathing, outdoor meals, is as much a part of the living room, dining-kitchen as if the glass wall under the shading porch were not there.

If the walls of this small house were given no more than the usual number of small windows, the space would seem so limited as to be stifling. The glass from floors to ceiling opens the house visually and emotionally.

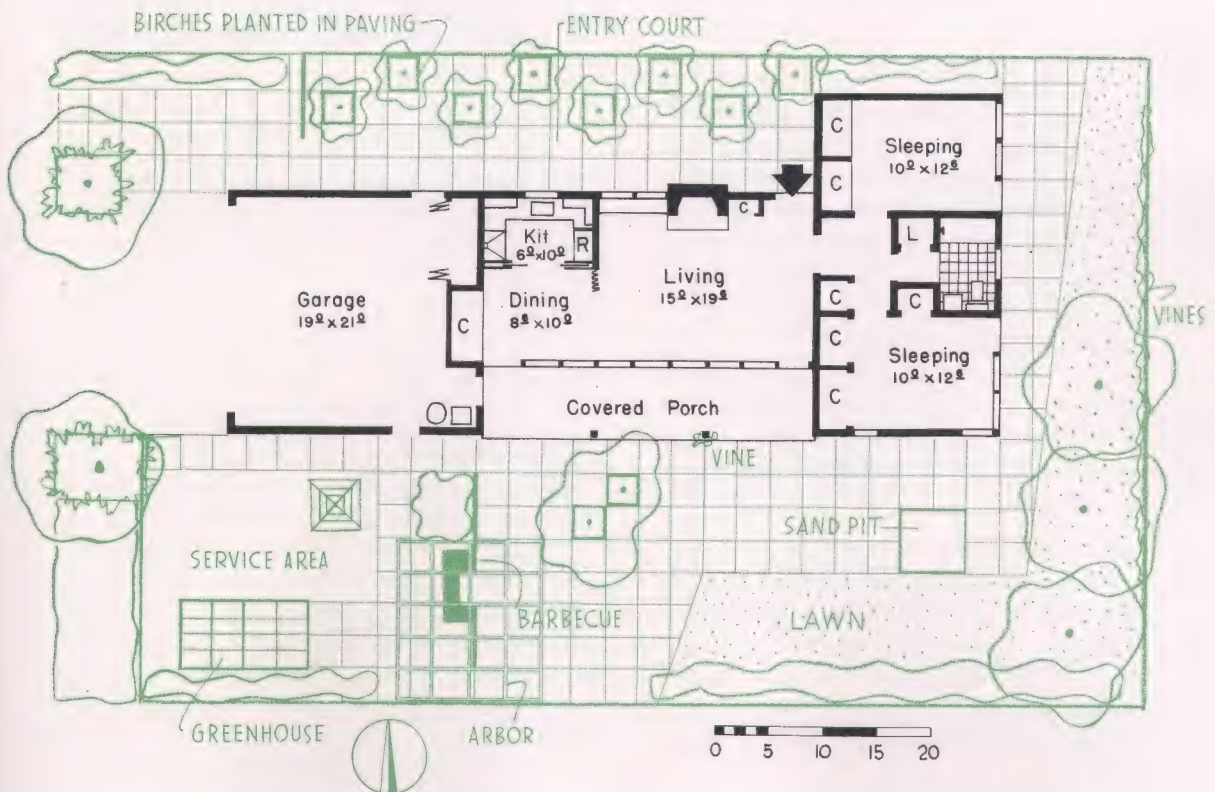
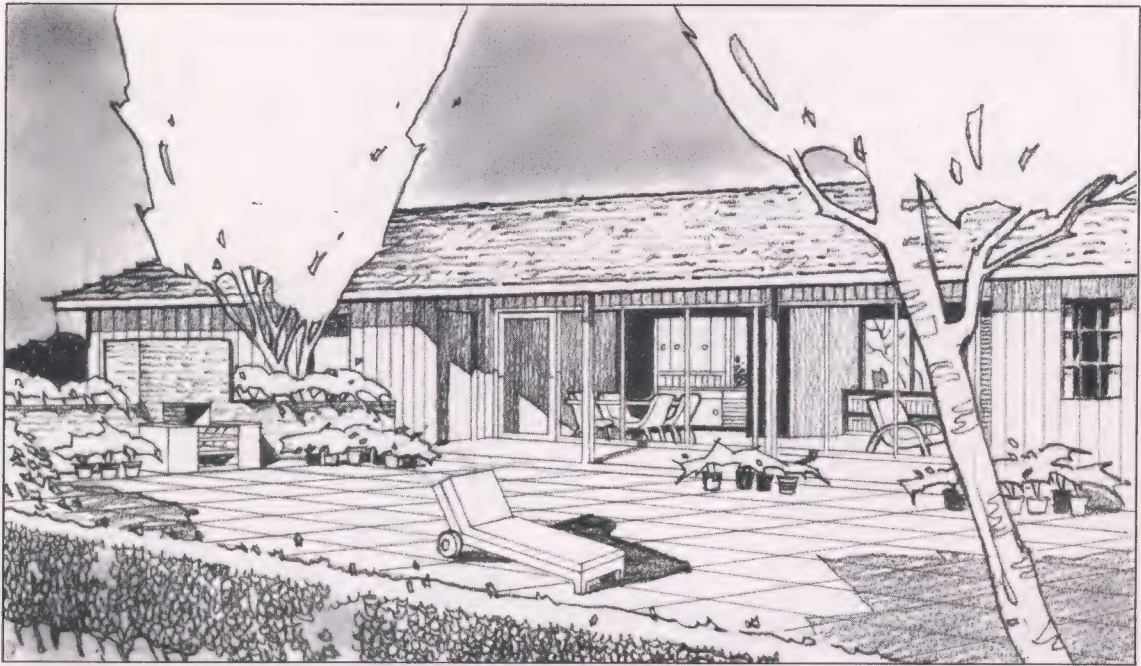
The advantage of a large south terrace is appreciated by all gardeners.

When you turn your living toward the sun, you

must think of ways and means of controlling the hot rays in summer without omitting the low winter rays. Here, the covered porch is a sun visor for the living-dining room.

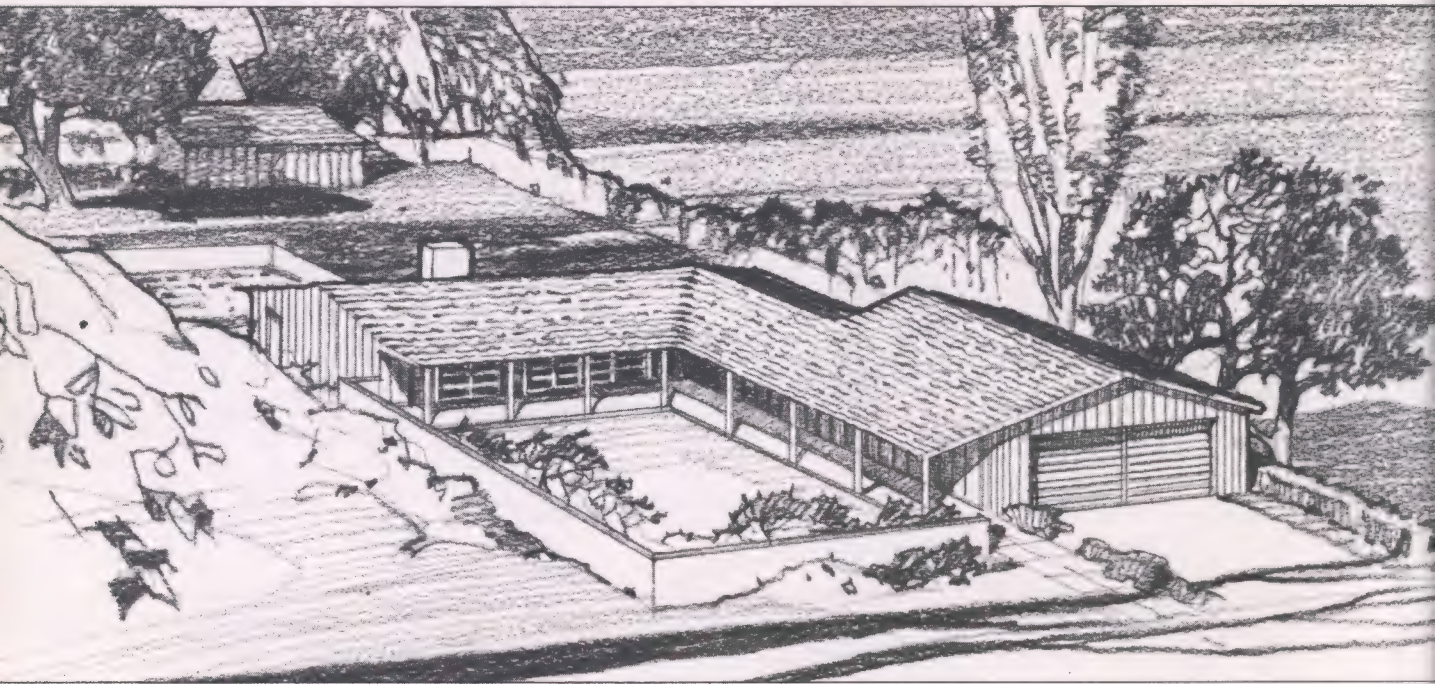
Southern terraces of this type (see illustration) can take care of a lot of gardening activity, if the owner desires, without sacrificing livability. Pots and tubs could be cared for in the adjoining service area and brought into the terrace when ready to bloom. A raised bed along the south fence would give you a place for shade plantings. If more in-the-soil planting were wanted, the indicated grass panel could be devoted to cutting flowers. As now arranged, the garden is planned for good appearance through all seasons, with minimum effort in upkeep.





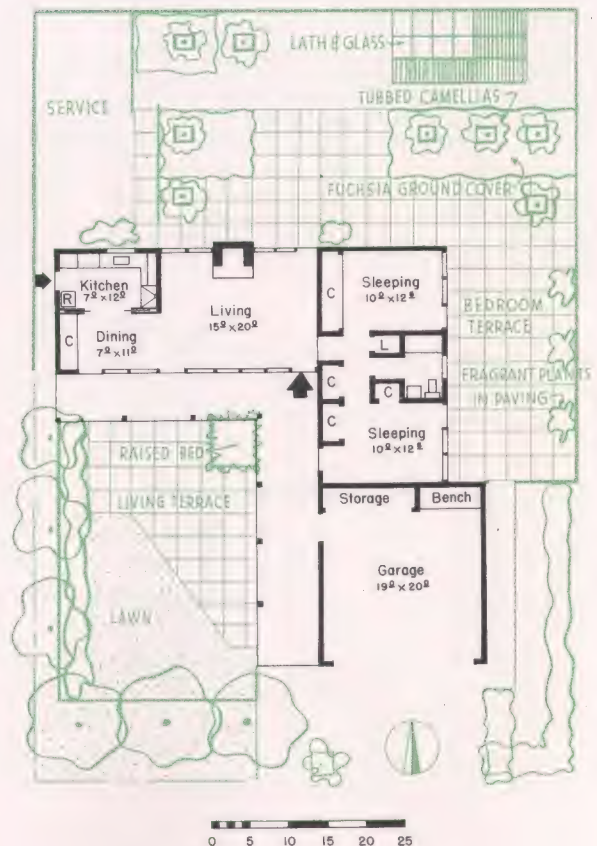


## Regardless of how your lot faces . . .



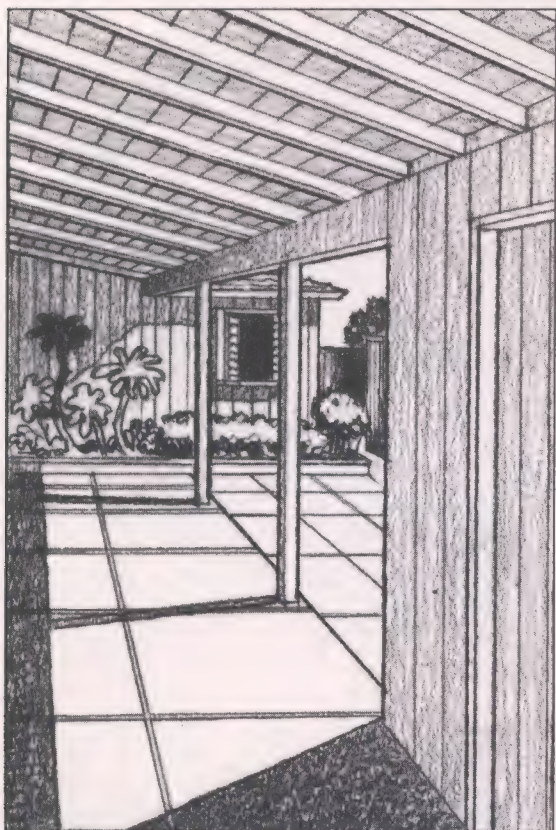
Much of the livability of the house, inside and out, depends upon the proper placement of the house on the site. But in the minds of many builders, the *front* of the house must face the street and the living room must be the *front* room. Where the lot faces south, the southern exposure and southern warm terrace are impossible if the living room faces directly on the street. In this simple house, the living room is set back almost 50 feet from the street and the resulting area is enclosed by a fence. Within the enclosed court the normal outdoor activities could be carried on.

Since the kitchen area is to the rear, a service path is provided by setting the fence back from the property line. Trees are planted outside the fence. (Follow the landscape plan rather than the illustration.) Trees planted outside fences make the garden seem larger, yet give the area the same shade and protection as if they were planted inside.





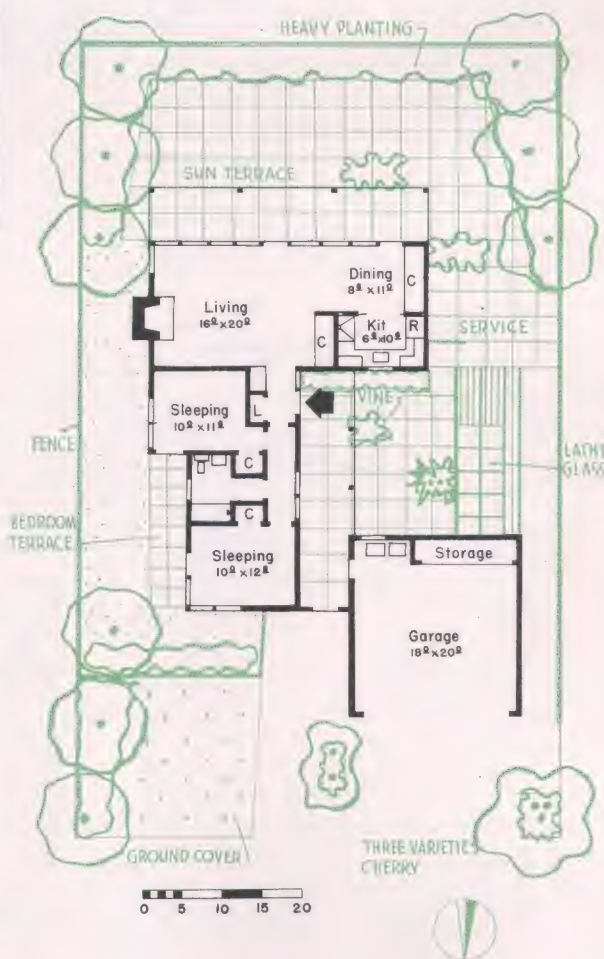
## your living can face south



To orient the house so that living room and the main outdoor rooms can enjoy the sun the year around is not difficult even on a 60-foot lot. If the lot faces north, the living room must, of course, be placed so that it opens onto the rear of the lot. In this house, entrance is a gate between the garage and the house, and the entrance hall is the long, covered porch.

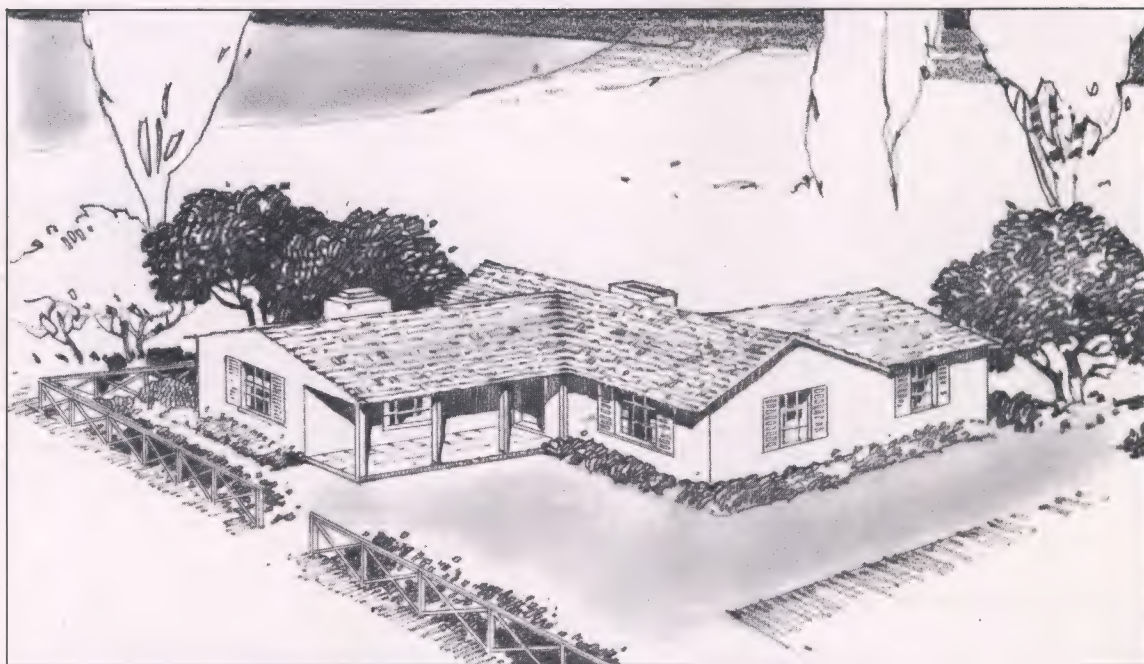
The landscape plan is most efficient. A small lath-and-glass house creates a cool courtyard opposite the sleeping wing of the house. The service area is screened off from the living terrace and has access to the street through a separate entrance. The glass wall of the living room is given protection by the porch and trees. The bedrooms have their private outdoor living space. The distance between bedroom wall and fence is less than 15 feet, but even that small area makes the bedrooms more attractive.

(Remember, in checking plans of house and garden, that only space that has privacy should be considered as *living space*. Don't let the indication of a porch or terrace on a plan convince you that there will be adequate outdoor-living space. Check to see how well that space is protected from the weather and from the eyes of neighbors or passers by.)





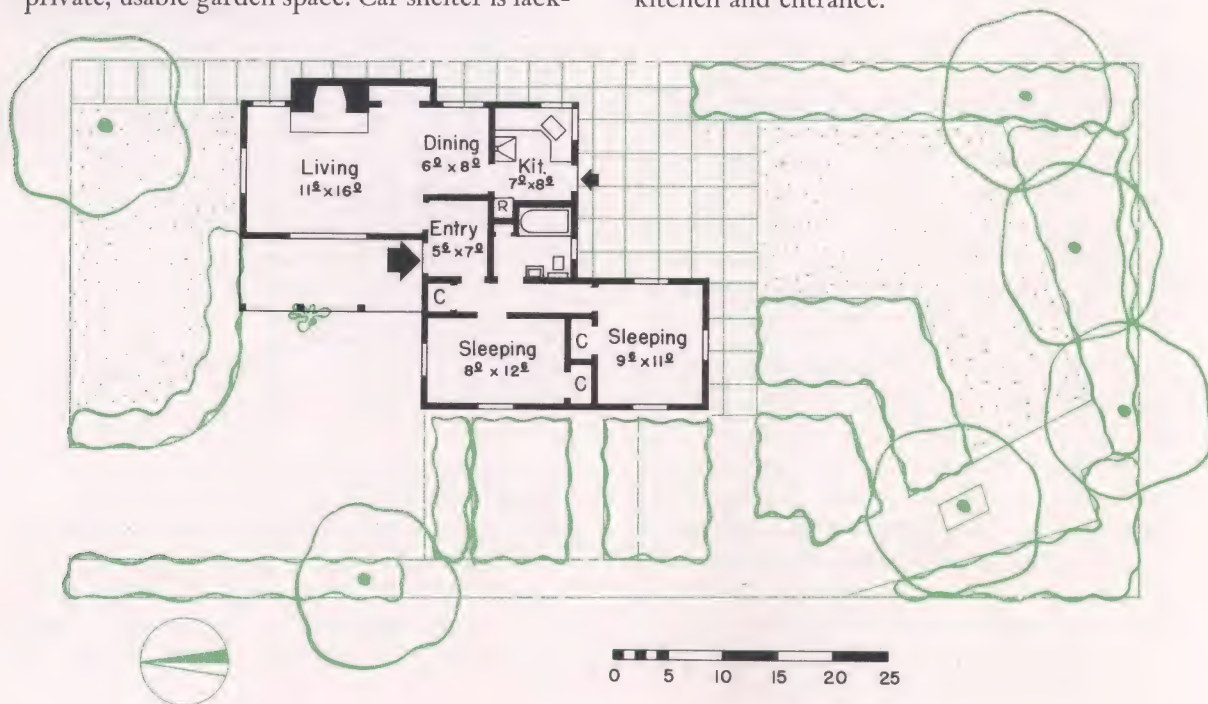
## There should be no “front” or “back”



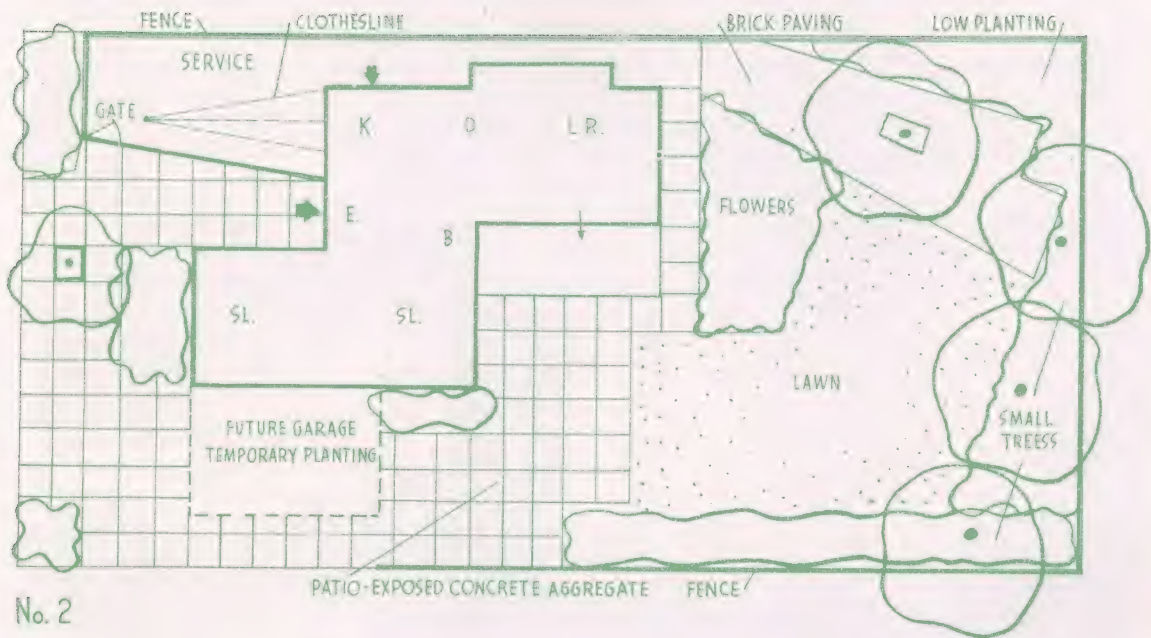
Good houses perform badly when thoughtlessly located on a site.

As it now stands, on a 50-foot lot, this house offers slight chance to open the living room into private, usable garden space. Car shelter is lack-

ing, but could be built next to the rear bedroom. Plan No. 2 shows how reversing the room arrangement would give living room access to the rear garden and privacy. Plan No. 3 places house across the lot, brings car shelter closer to kitchen and entrance.

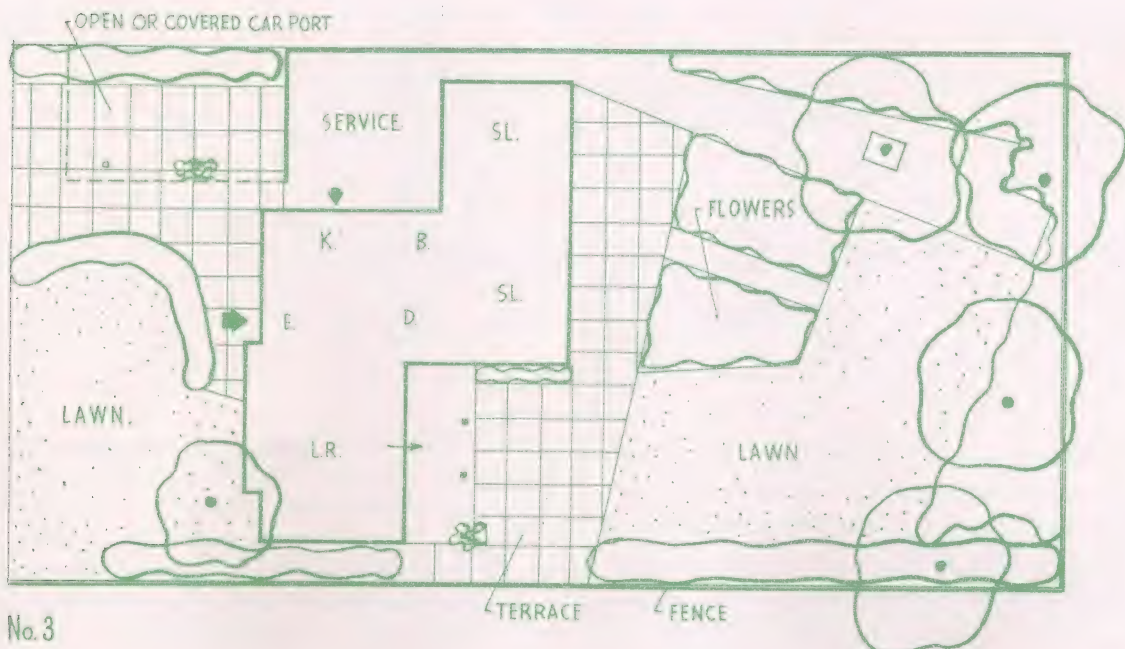






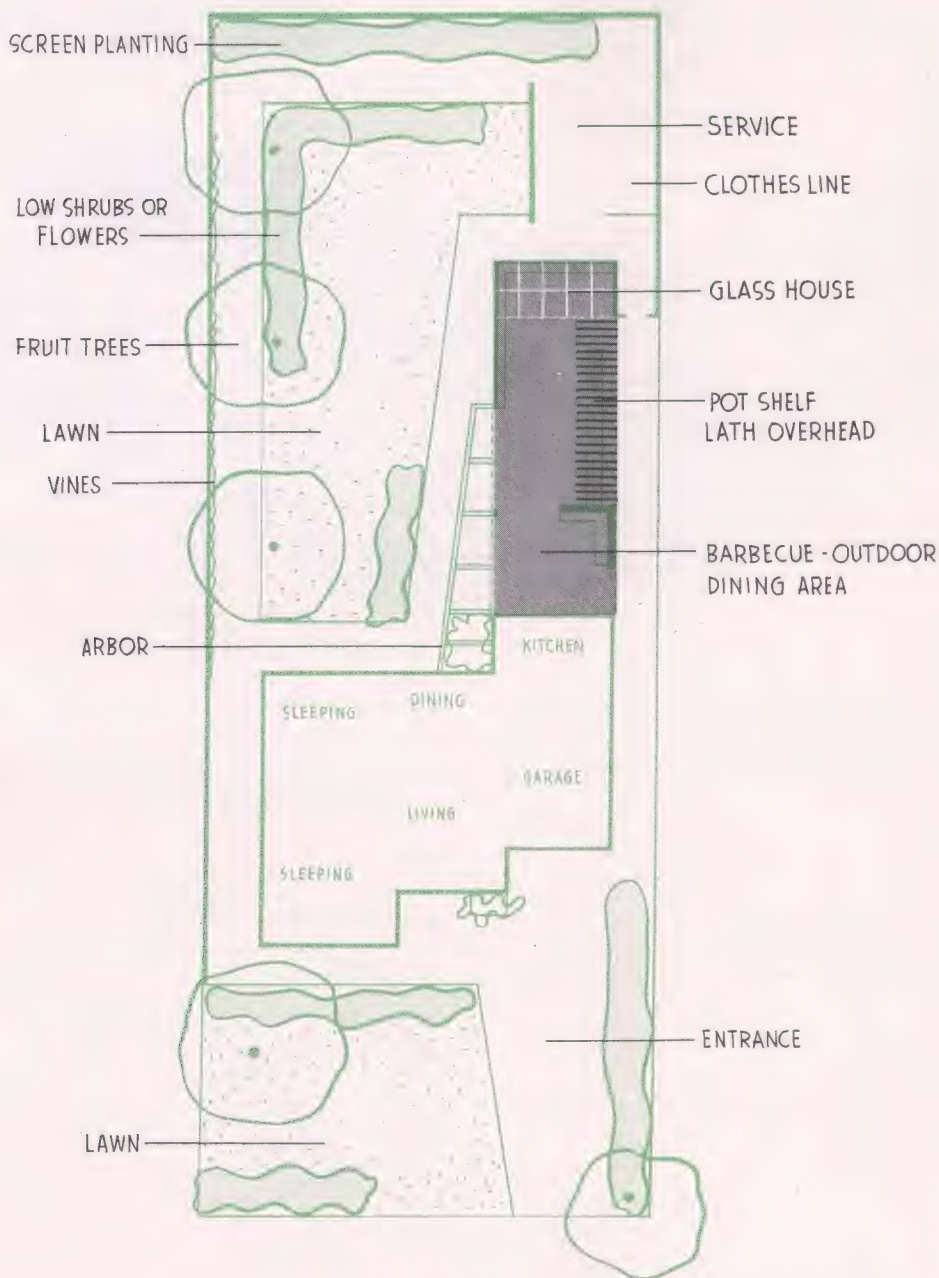
This last variation is the best plan, but would require a wider lot in localities where codes demand more side space between the house and the side lot lines.

There is no danger in "flopping" a plan as has been done in examples 2 and 3. Houses that are well designed need make no excuses for turning any side toward the street.





## Ranch house adds living space

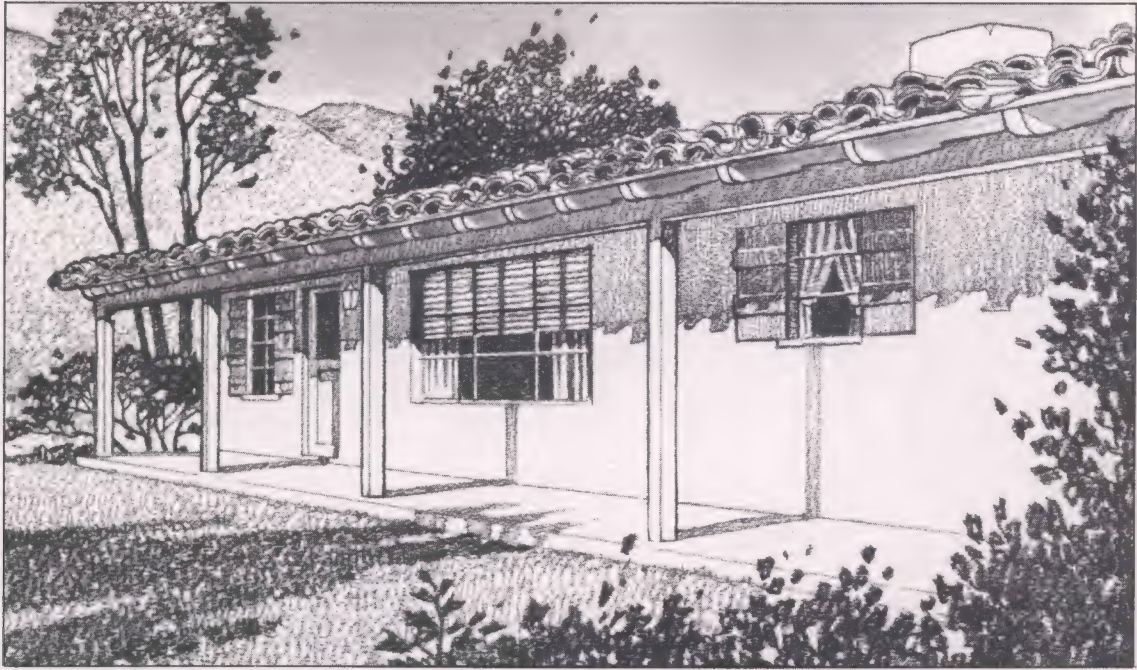


The difference between planning for a house on a lot and planning for living all over the lot is illustrated here. The plan is that of the conventional box house located in the conventional manner, with the only entrances and exits being the conventional front and back door. Even to

approximate the amount of livable space, the owner must punch a hole through the box by changing dining room window to a door and adding a covered passageway. This addition, serving as outdoor living room, greenhouse, garden room, could have been a part of the house if planned in the ranch-house pattern.



## A two-room house with a five-room garden



Where climate permits, there is a theory that a house is large enough when it is capable of storing food and clothing. This exaggeration is worth considering when planning a very small house. The outdoor areas must be considered of equal importance to the roofed-over area if you wish to expand the living area.

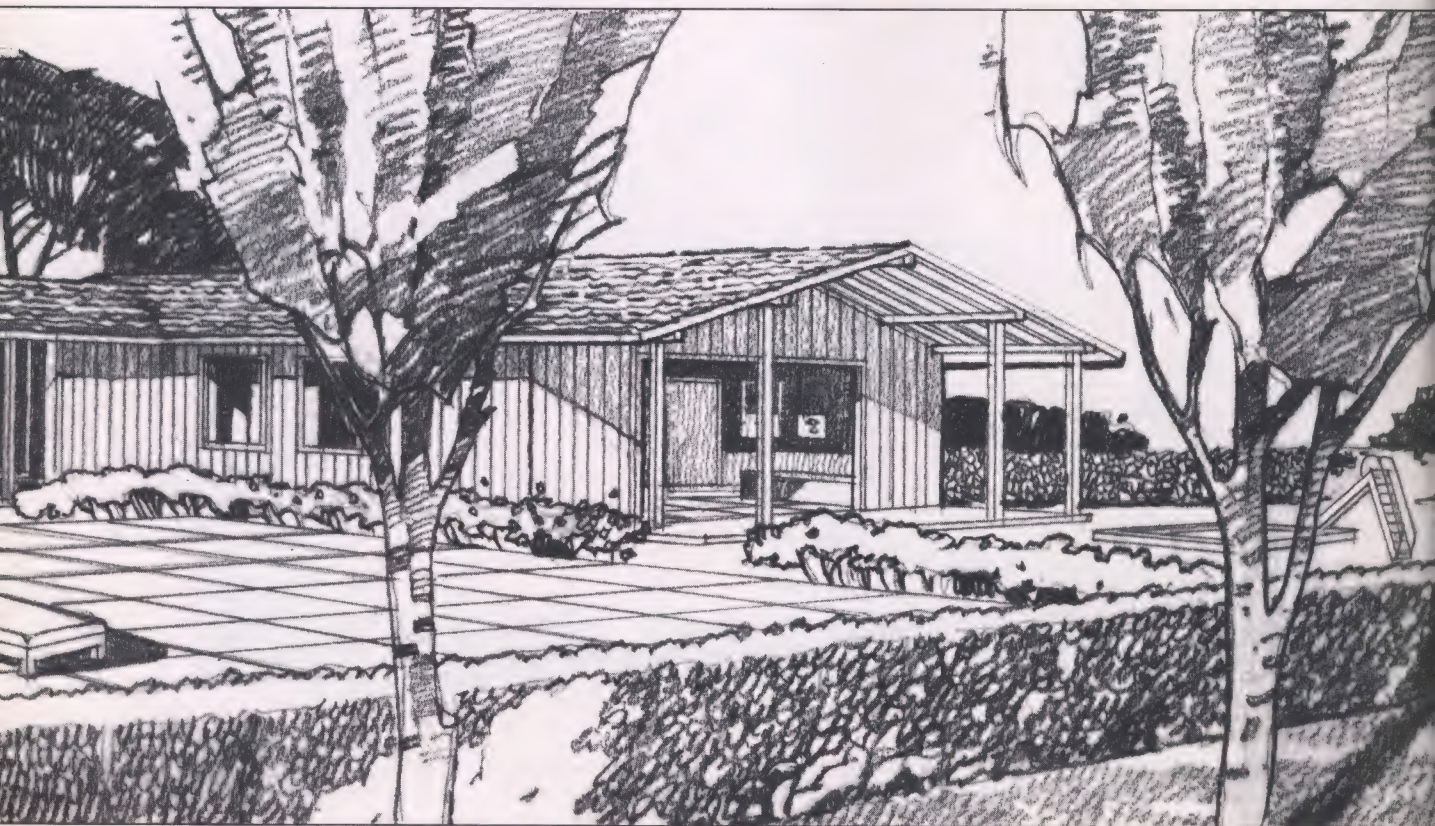
In localities where climate is adverse, more protection could be provided in the outdoor rooms through covered garden or barbecue room.

Note, in plan, that the living room contains two bed-closets. Folding beds, fixed to the closet doors, are easy to handle and about the only solution for guest beds in the two-room house.





## Ranch house encourages use of glass



To say that the ranch house encourages the use of glass may seem far-fetched when you look back at the old ranch houses illustrated in the opening chapter. But if you consider the plan of the early houses, you can see how ideally suited they were for glass walls—not on the street side, but completely around the patio.

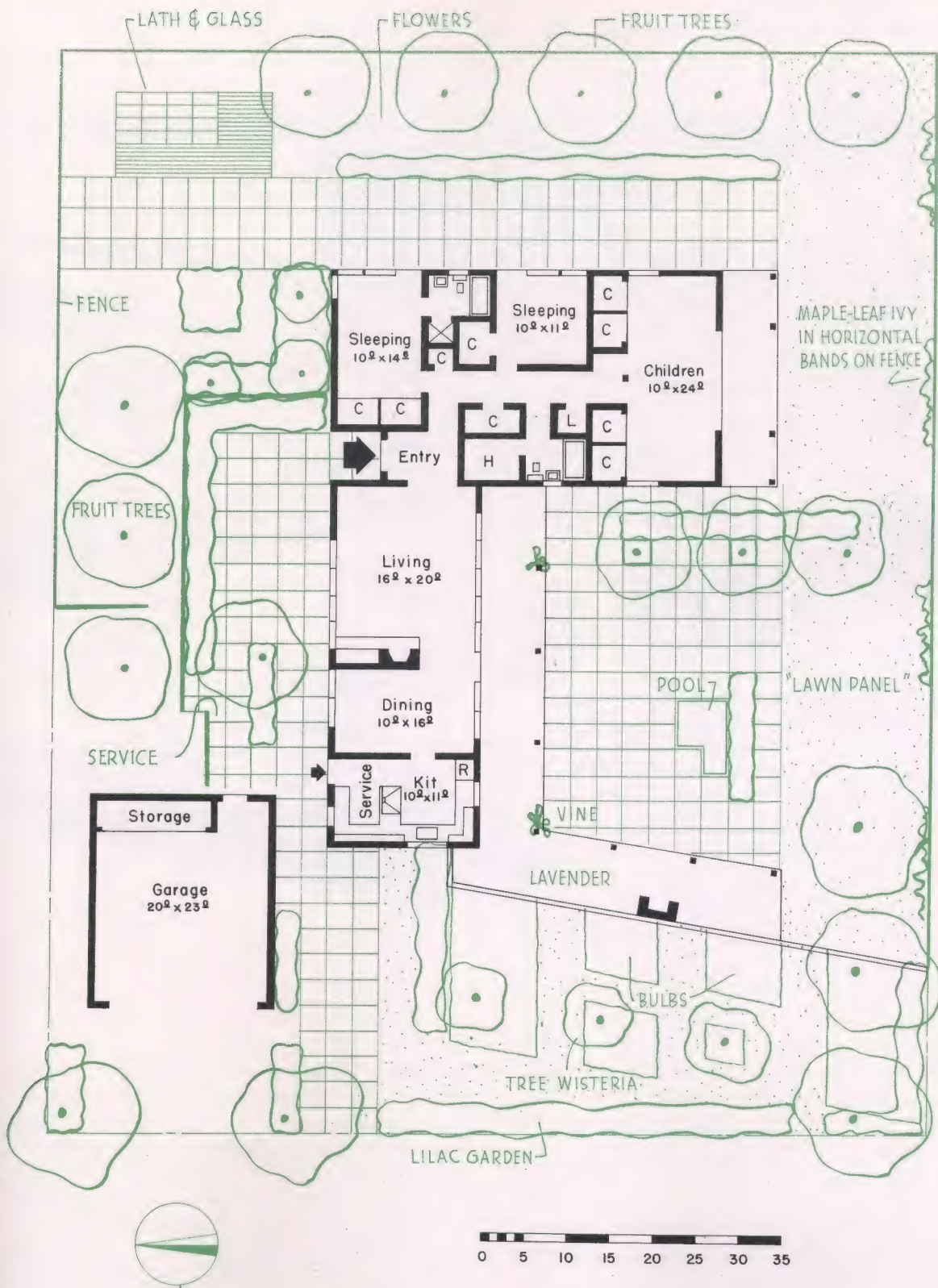
You need have no fear of living in a fish bowl if all the glass areas face your own private garden. The fact is that the ranch house, from the built-around-a-patio unit to the rambling type, naturally forms sheltered, outdoor areas in its wings. These areas are in reality a part of

the house itself, and are as private as the more protected, indoor rooms.

In many modern ranch houses, the covered passageway between buildings, so common in the old houses, is transformed into a glassed gallery. In this little ranch house, glass is used most freely. It allows the house to do what a ranch house is supposed to do—let the outdoors in.

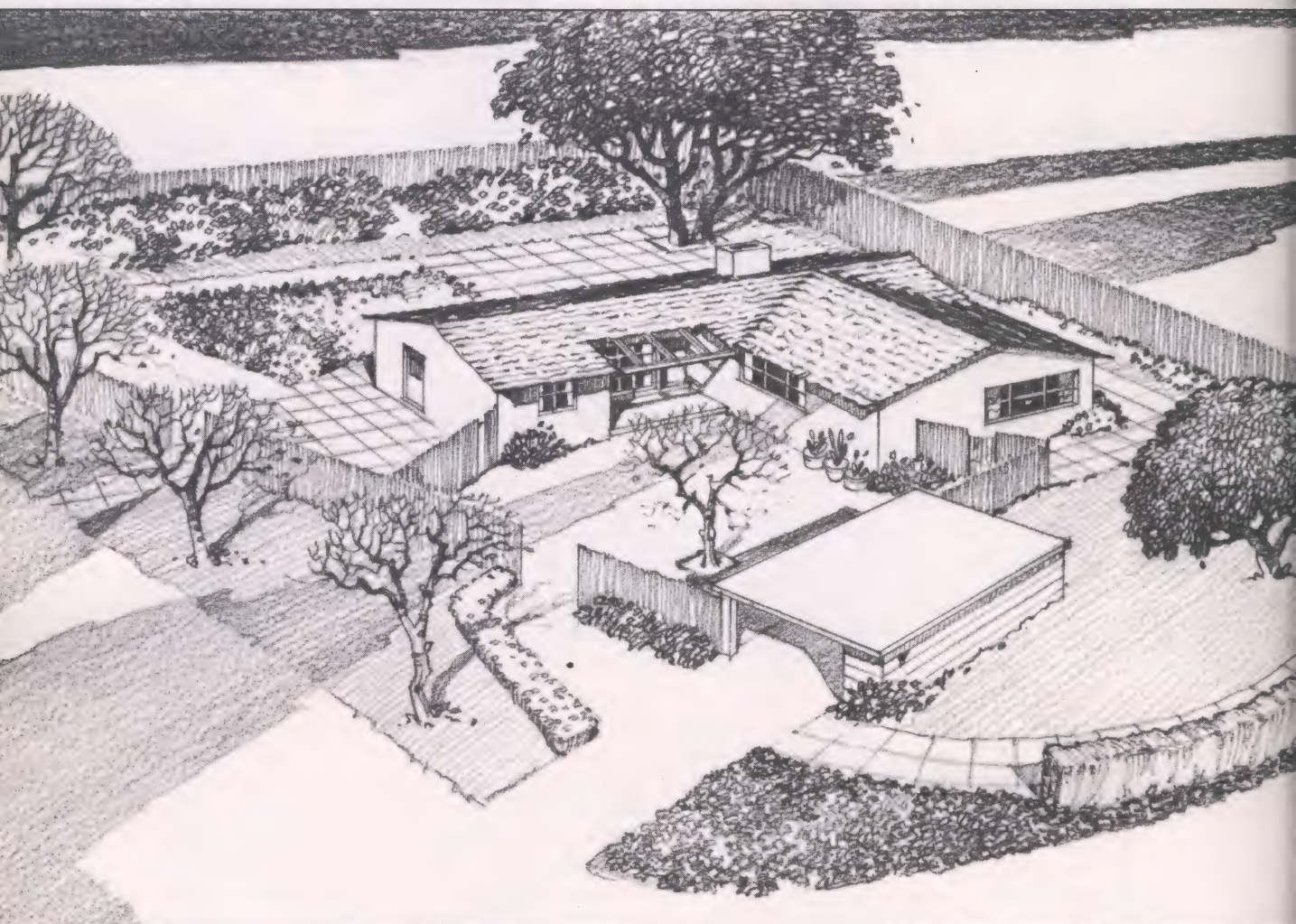
The fact that the living room has two walls of glass is no problem in privacy. The garden wall 16 feet beyond the north wall of the living room serves as the visual wall of the room. (In cold climate, less glass should be used in north wall.)







## Living space is total combination of indoor-outdoor space

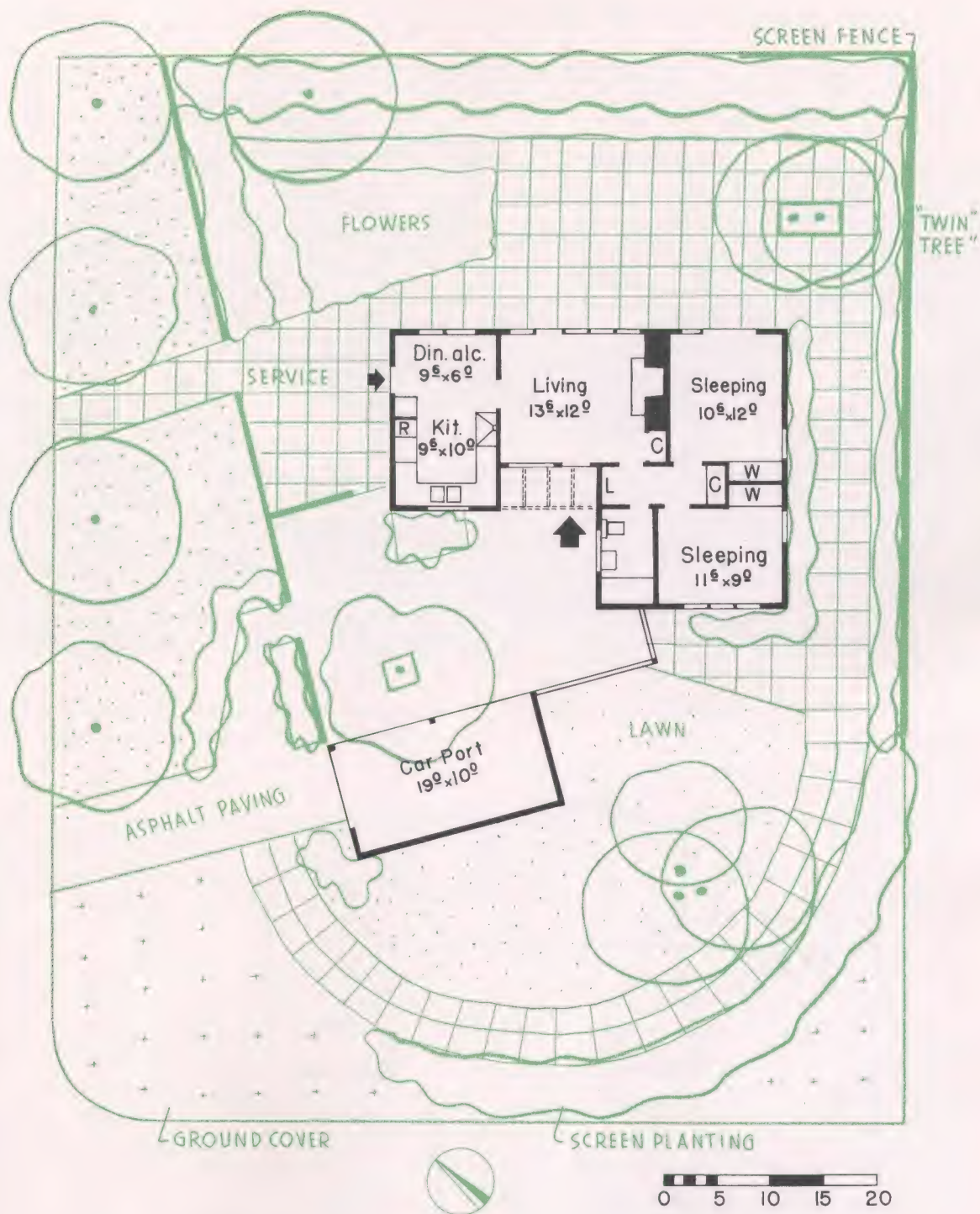


Let's take as gospel truth the idea that living space is the total combination of indoor-outdoor space and see what happens when you apply it to a very small house on a relatively large lot. Outdoor space becomes livable space only when it is given privacy and a direct relationship with the rooms of the house. For example, the terrace extending from the living room and dining alcove acts as an extension of those rooms. The

livability of this extension could be increased by giving it the roof protection of a porch or the wind protection of a wall at right angles to the house from the fireplace. If the service area were enlarged and the kitchen roof extended so that an enclosed service and laundry room could be arranged, one of the shortcomings of the small house would be overcome.

The ease of movement throughout the outdoor





area makes possible a continuing development of the property. If, for example, an additional room—a hobby room, greenhouse, or lathouse

— were built onto the carport, the wide, paved “hallways” connecting all of the outdoor rooms would prevent its being isolated.



## A black and white line drawing of a single-story house with a tiled roof. The house features a large central window and a smaller window on the left. A large, leafy tree stands to the right of the house. In the foreground, there is a paved patio area with a lounge chair and a small table. A pergola structure is visible on the left side of the patio. The house is surrounded by landscaping, including bushes and a lawn.

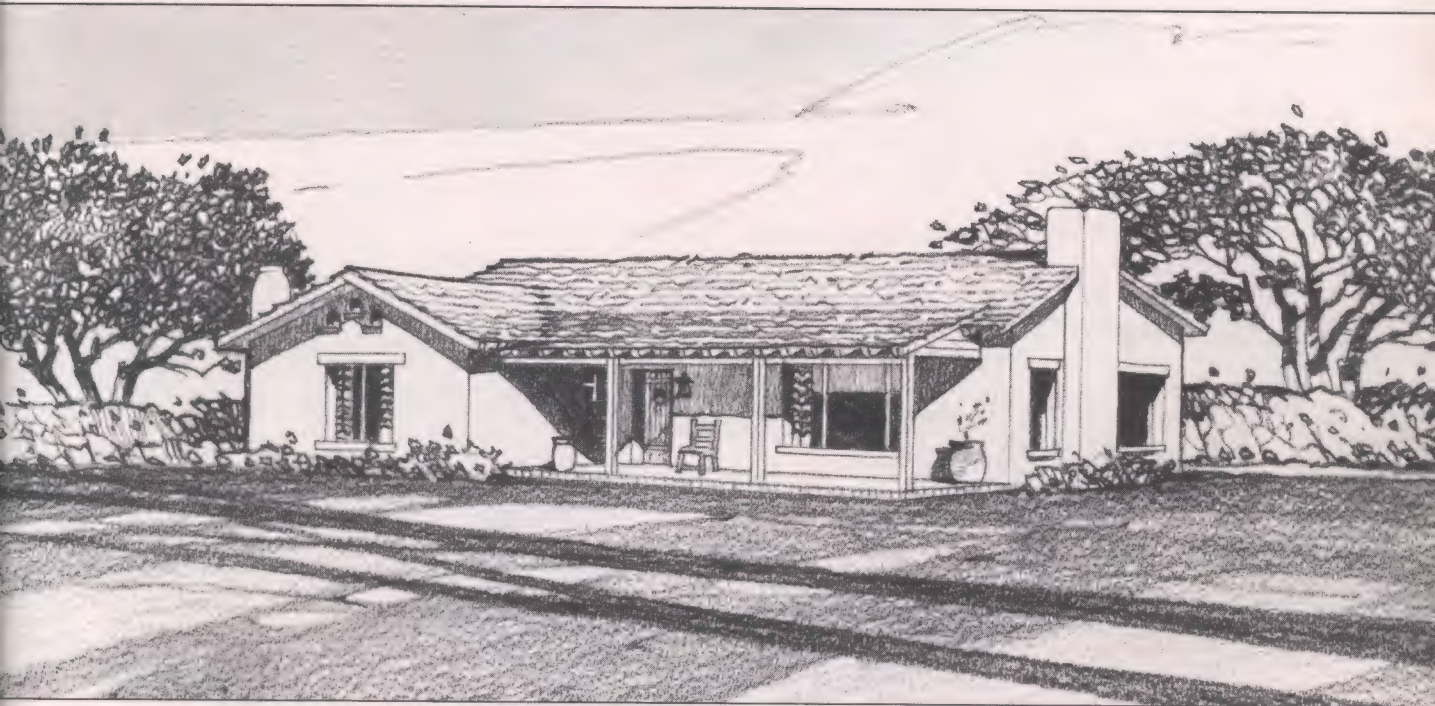
All the rooms are “enlarged” by opening them onto porch or patio.

If an additional bedroom is needed, it could be added where the barbecue is now located.





## Adobe on a town lot

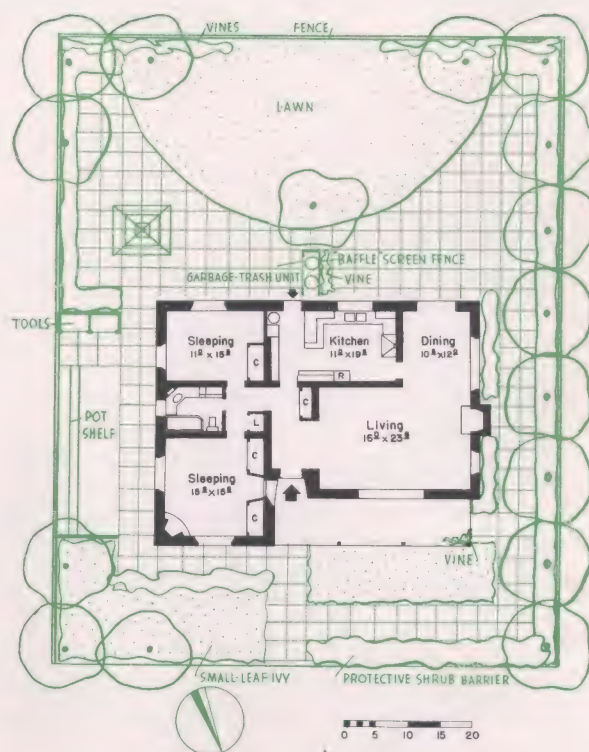


The use of emulsified asphaltum as a stabilizer in the making of adobe bricks, and their resulting quality of being impervious to moisture have distributed the practical use of adobe far beyond the mild-climate areas.

Adobe's outstanding virtue is its natural insulating quality. An adobe house is practically fireproof, and insulated against heat and cold, sound and moisture.

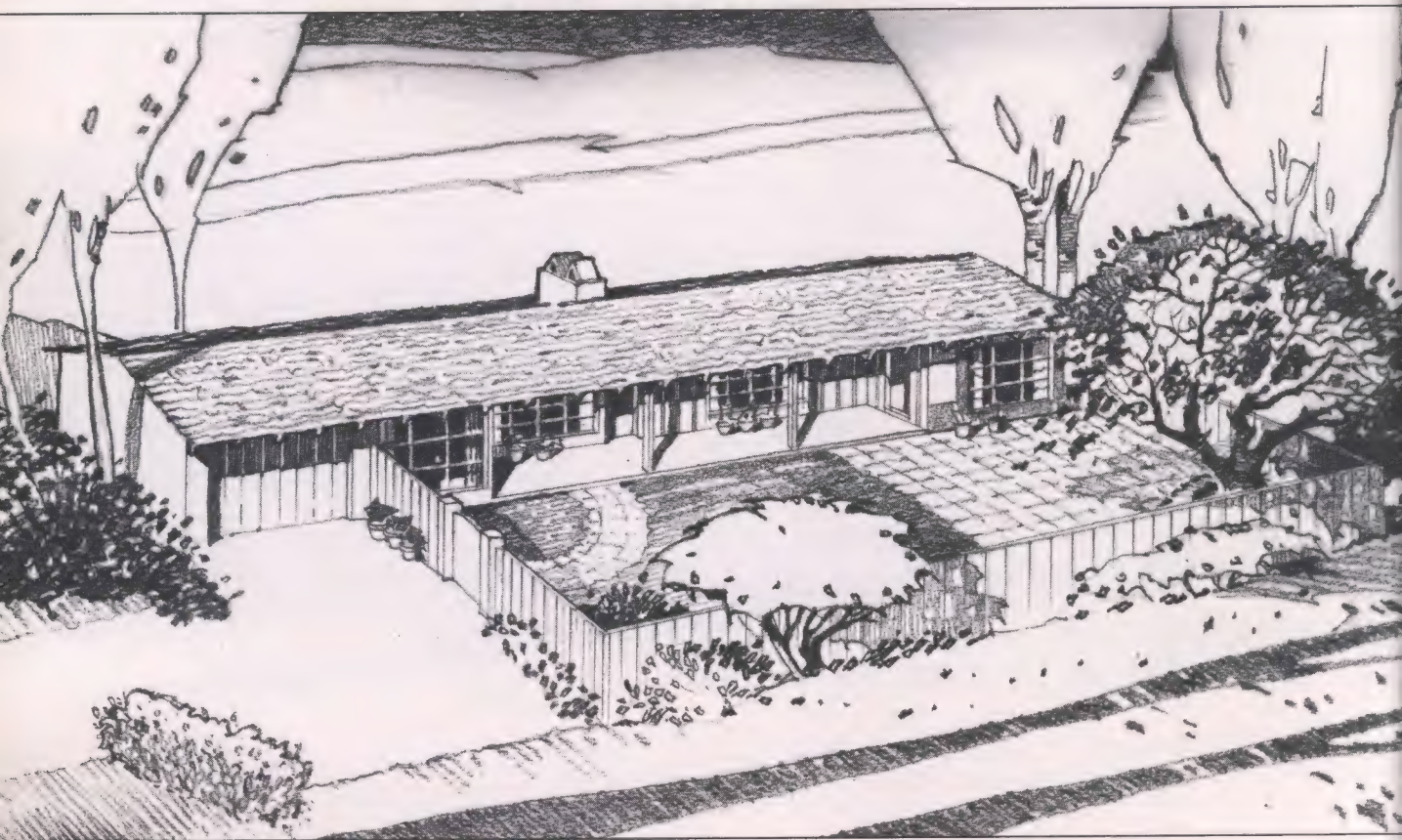
Because of the thickness of the walls, anything but a straightforward treatment of the exterior is impossible. Invariably, the adobe house does not pretend to be anything more or less than substantial and homey.

Note these features in the garden plan: service area that can be converted into play space; outdoor storage for pots and garden tools; the half circle of lawn introduces a soft texture into the paved area without destroying the general use of the terrace.





## Variation on the same plan



The simple plan of rooms in a row is especially efficient when you want a large outdoor living space and the lot faces east or west or south. With the house along the north side of the lot and the south side fenced, the garden and play area is not cut into "front" and "back" yards. Plan can be changed to incorporate a hall leading from living room past the first bedroom, but in mild climates the outside corridor is the simple, economical solution.

Two variations of exterior are shown for the same plan.

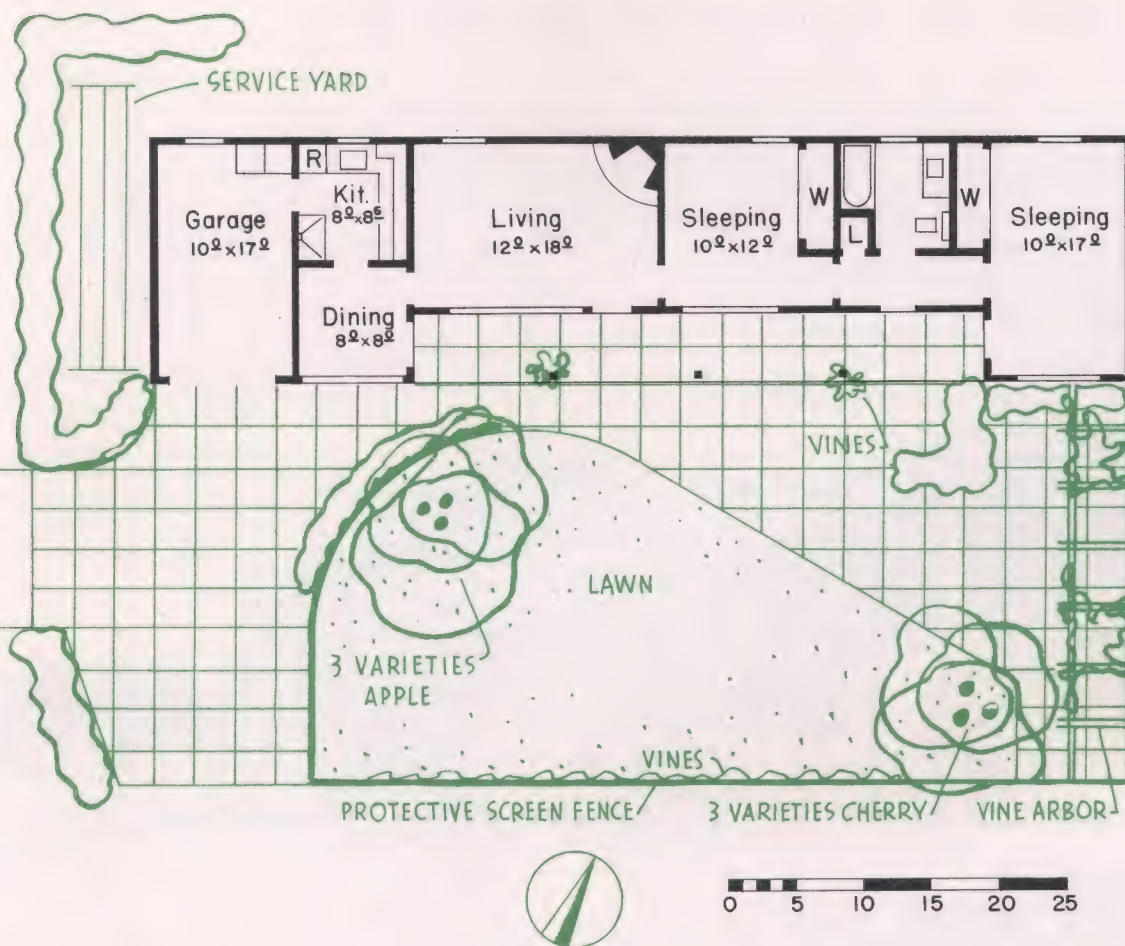
This house is so simple that you should have no trouble duplicating it without detailed plans and specifications and, at the same time, making any variations you desire to fit it more closely to your own particular needs. Remember, in

showing it to your contractor, that much of the charm of the house is derived from the fact that floors are practically at ground level, that the roof is pitched low.

The garden plan suggested in the illustration is the conventional solution and differs from the diagram in far more than appearance. In the diagram, the terrace runs along the entire porch to give it greater width. The lawn panel in the diagram breaks the area into more interesting shapes than do the straight line and curved path in the illustration. The central tree and its arc of low shrubs divide the exterior and interior areas of the patio, but allow movement between them and give added privacy.

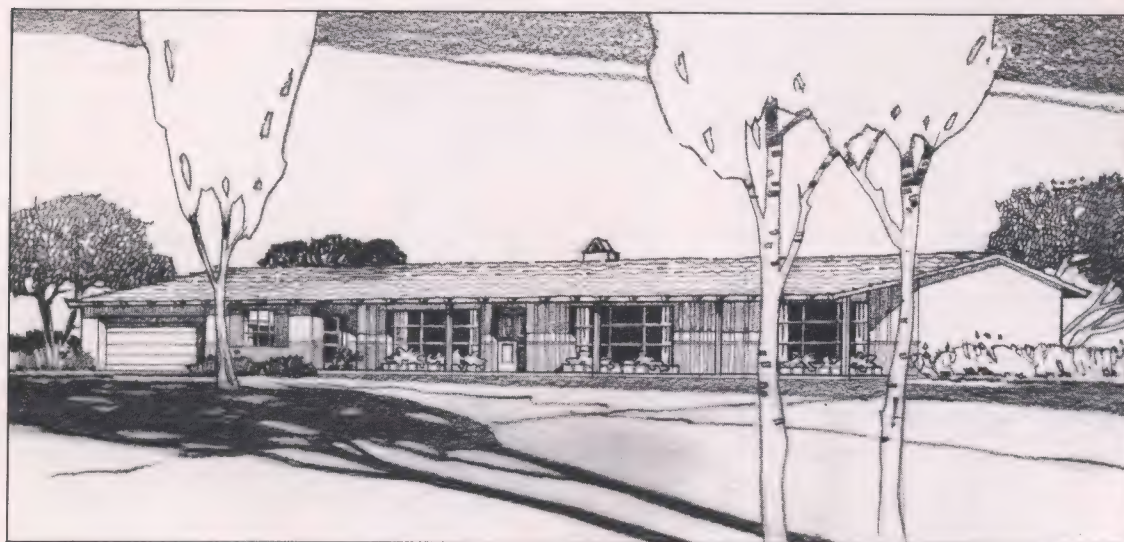
Here, again, don't assume that the garden is flowerless. You can decorate it in numerous





ways with vines, pots, tubs, or a border of cutting flowers along the fence. As usual, the garden plan indicates the main structure of the gar-

den and leaves its decoration up to you so that you can have the fun of giving it your personality — your favorite color scheme.





## Room for 8 guests or a family of 8

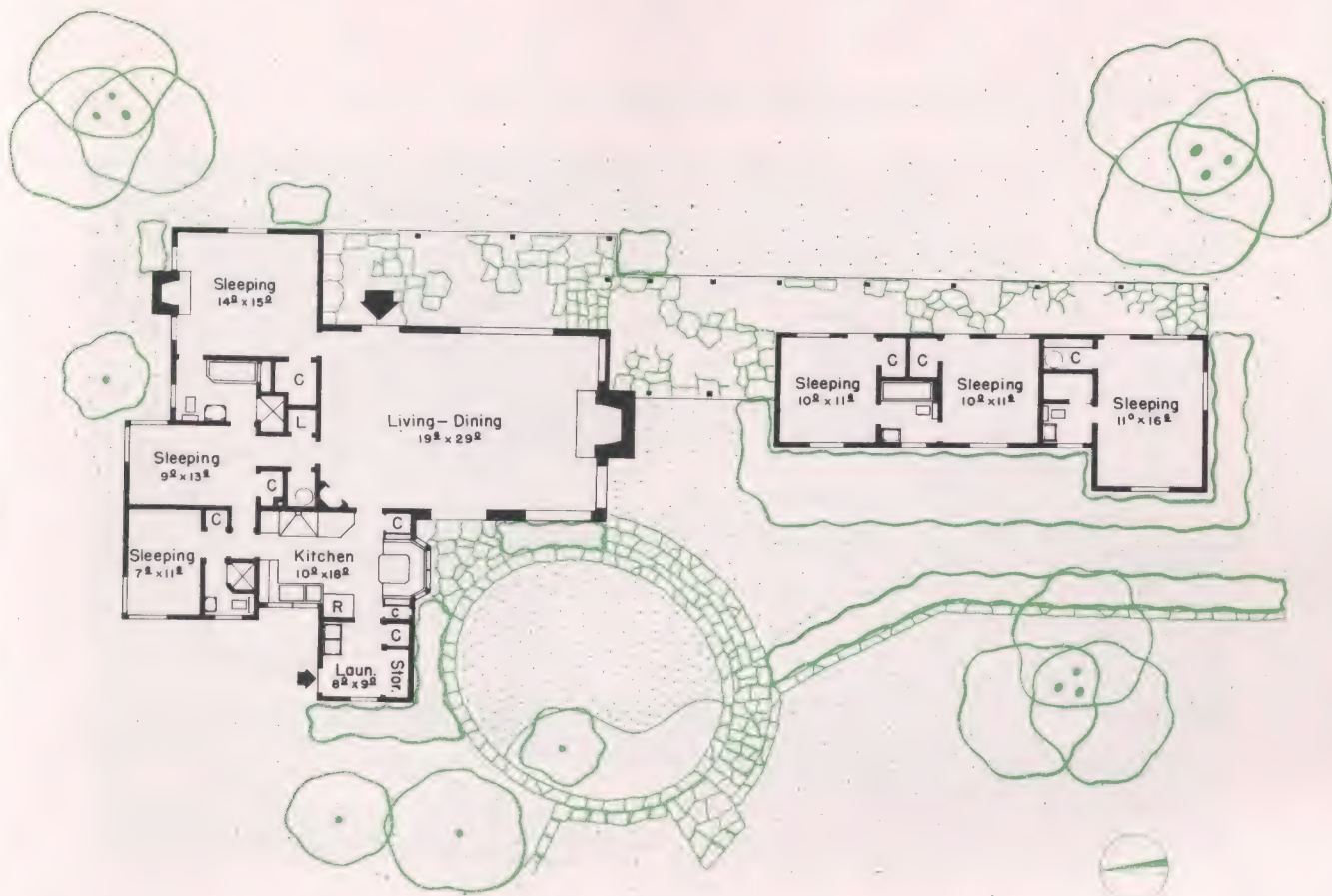


Planned for a family which enjoys week-end guests from the city, this house employs the old ranch-house device of a separate bedroom wing connected with the main house by a covered passageway. This device is especially useful when such a house is built on a slope. The level of one unit may be higher or lower than the other without disturbing the lines of the house. The usefulness of a separate bedroom wing is still further increased when it is planned to serve

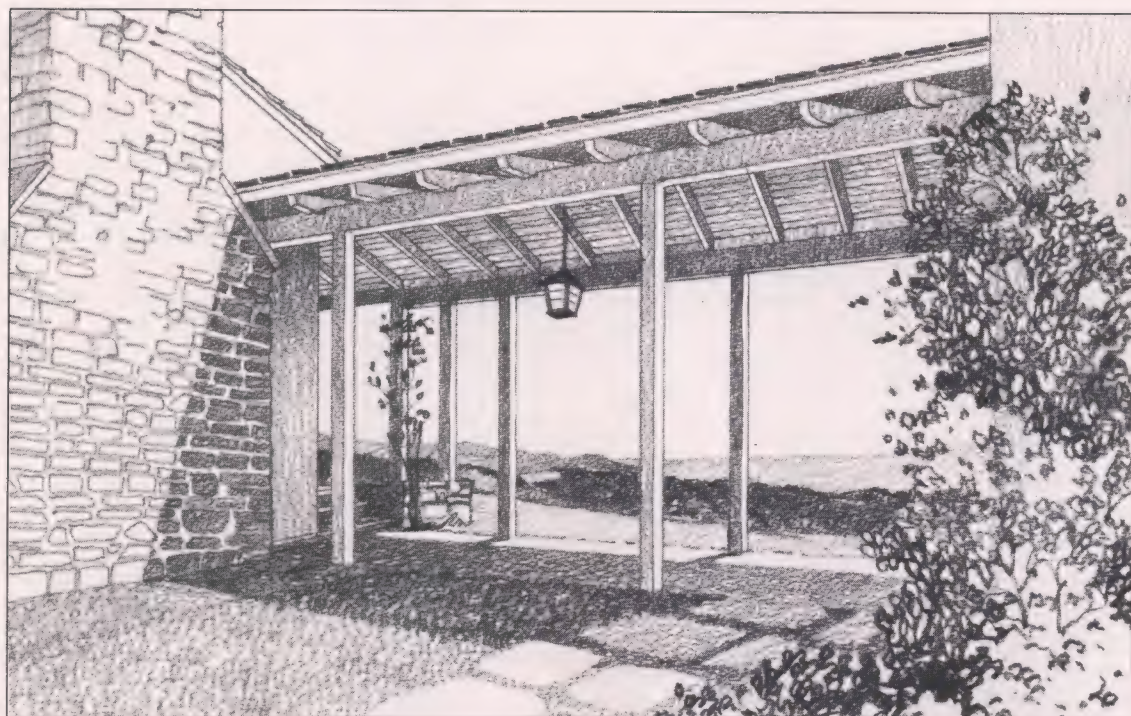
as an extra apartment, complete in its living facilities, where a separate couple or small family can live. The wing thus used becomes desirable income property, easily reconverted as the whim or need of the owner changes.

Since the house looks out upon the rolling hills and the valley below, the front of the house is free of planting and the living room opens to the oval terrace.



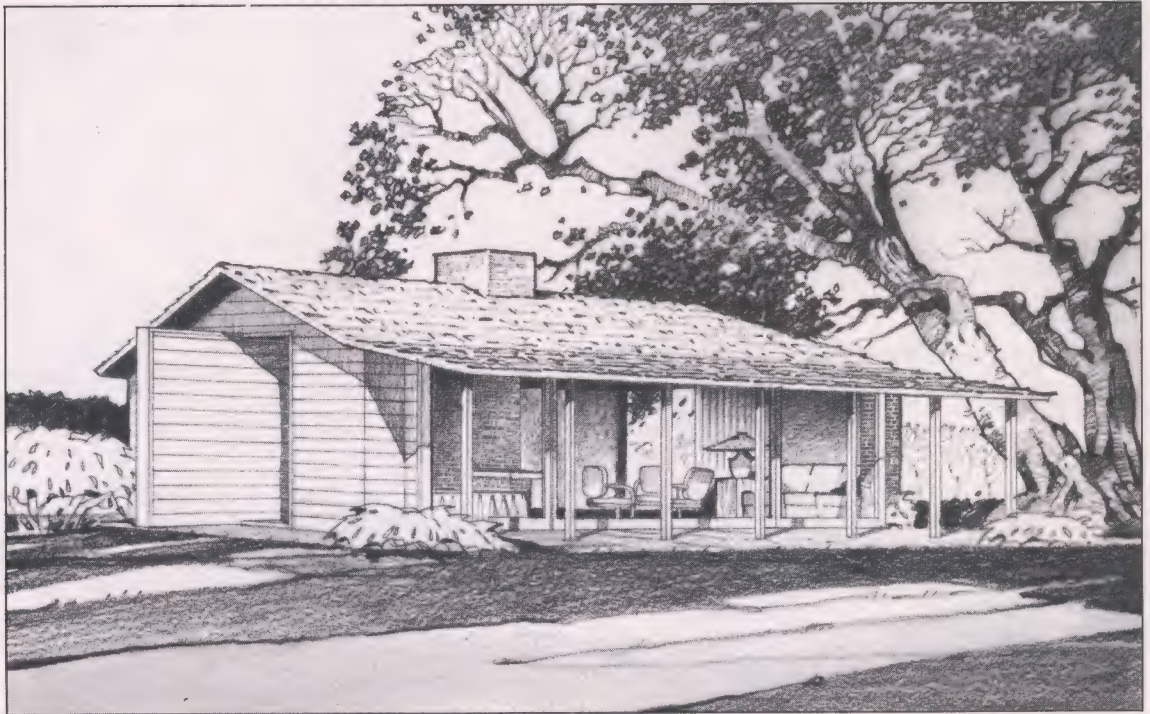


0 5 10 15 20 25



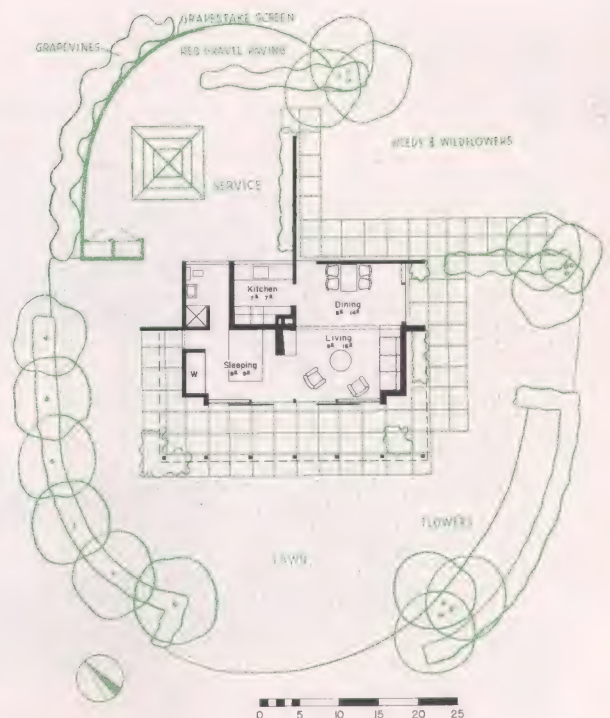


## A week-end ranch house



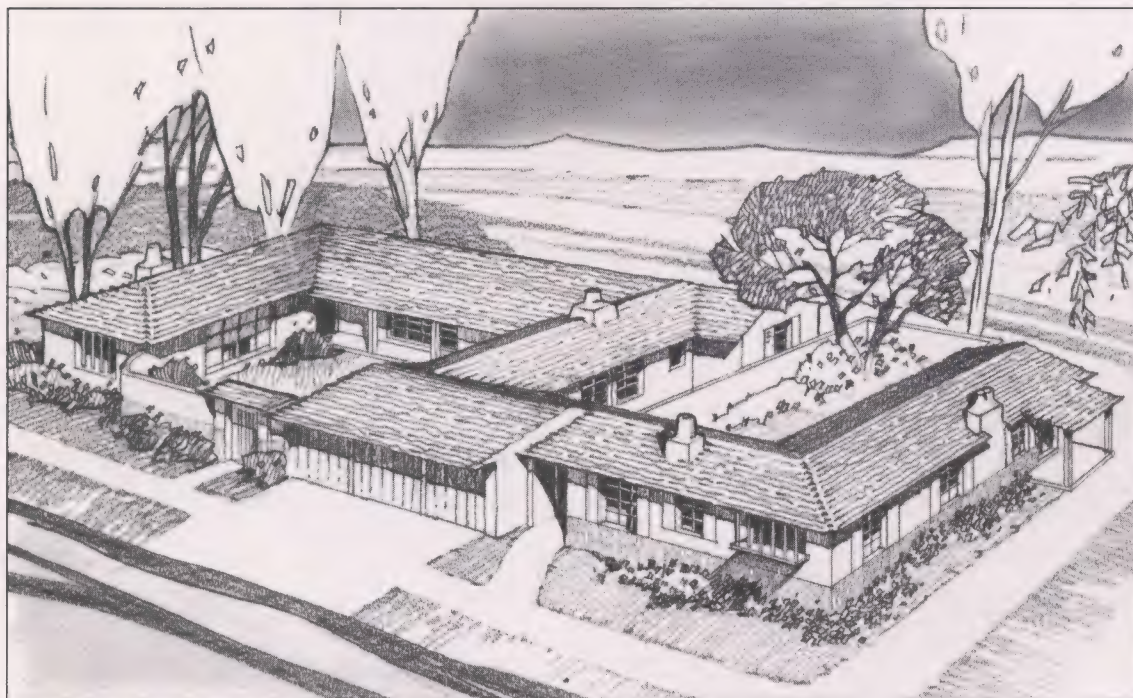
If you take the cabin of the American pioneer and give it plumbing and sheets of glass, you have this modern ranch house. Give it a flat roof with an overhang to protect the windows from the sun and it becomes what is commonly known as "modern." Regardless of name, it gives ranch-house living. It is designed to be so much a part of the out-of-doors that it would be out of place except in a naturalistic setting. It might be a guest house hidden in a large garden, or a week-end retreat in the woods.

That the free use of glass creates the need for view-screens is recognized in the landscaping (see the row of trees bending around one corner of the site). The service area is given privacy by a fence and a projecting baffle of the same material as the house wall. In planting, no attempt is made to create color or form that would set the cabin apart from its surroundings.





## A ranch house can be a duplex



When you reach the age that looks forward to the pleasure of growing old leisurely and gracefully, perhaps traveling a few months of each year, there are a number of appealing advantages to be seen in the two-family unit.

In the duplex, if it is properly planned, you can maintain the privacy and independence you want and still have a friendly family within calling distance. If you build the unit and are careful in selecting your tenants, you can leave

your house and garden in their care while you are traveling.

Actually, you could build two separate units for just a little more than this duplex cost.

The interesting feature of this unit is its employment of the old, built-around-a-patio design. The protected patios give each house more livable outdoor space than is usually provided by the sub-dividers' small house on a 60-foot lot.





## The camera studies the ranch house



1



2





Here are four pictures—two views of a ranch house near Portland, Oregon, the entranceway to a ranch house among oak trees, and a small cottage. The charm of each is in its natural simplicity. The Oregon ranch house invites the

sun by its high porches and freedom from shade trees. The California house is almost hidden among the oaks. The little cottage (4) is the caddies' room at a golf club, but it could just as well be the house of a pioneer.

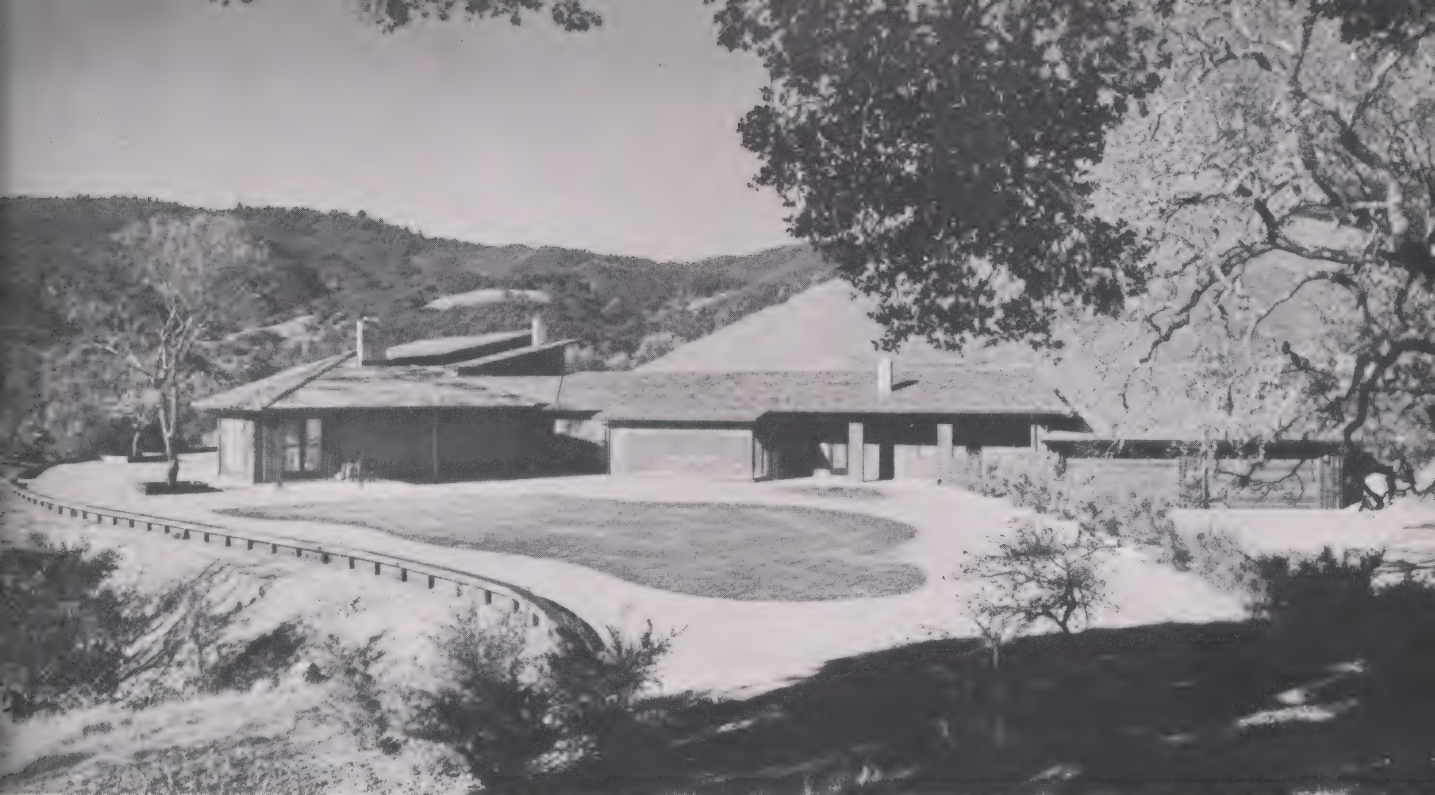
3











When the camera makes a record of a good ranch house, the time doesn't make much difference. There is no need to put the date of building in the caption of a photograph of a good ranch house. The house built in 1930 or 1920 is not marked with the style affectation of that year and seems entirely pleasing to the

eyes of critical, advancement-conscious today. In the one-story ranch houses, and in the Monterey (photograph 8), the designers have shown good discipline of thought by refraining from tricks in ornamentation. Sometimes it is hard to realize that simplicity is the secret of a long and pleasant life for a house.

7











The natural quality of the ranch house can be achieved in many natural ways. It is interesting to note that the two oldest methods of construction contain good design qualities that are unintentional by-products of the materials themselves. Board and batten (photograph 11) came about through need for covering joints be-

tween wood siding. That this narrow board casts interesting shadows was a discovery that followed the need to cover the crack. The unevenness of adobe brick and the resulting lights and shadows (photographs 9, 10) are the result of imperfection of handwork. Natural wood is part of the simple beauty of the house below.







13



14





Looking through the foregoing exteriors of Western ranch houses, it becomes evident that the *look* of the ranch house is not achieved by any style trick. The successful houses are those that most simply and directly answer the problem of their owners. That there is a feeling common to them all is the result of this common approach to their building.

Take the house shown on the page to the left. It is built on a hillside overlooking the Pacific Ocean. It has one story in back, two stories in front. Upstairs are living room and bedroom. Downstairs is the "kitchen cave," combining kitchen, dining room, and playroom. In all the house there is nothing that could not be built by local labor. The plain posts, the brick chimney, horizontal siding, even the hinged doors, can be handled by anyone who knows everyday methods of construction. Yet, this simple house has a sophistication in design equal to the mod-

ern ranch house illustrated immediately above.

One important lesson in house planning taught by the photographs and illustrations in this book is that neither in the exterior nor the interior is it necessary to labor for picturesqueness. Good ranch houses do not need wagon wheels. Good ranch houses don't need scallops, or imitations of handwork, or artificial aging.

It is true that the successful simplicity in many of these homes is the result of out-of-the-ordinary architectural skill. You may not be able to duplicate it in your home without the help of a skillful designer. However, if you must proceed without a designer, you have a much better chance of obtaining a satisfying house through the simple approach. Over the years it is the simple, straightforward house that does not go out of style, that has the highest resale value. After all, the real value in a house is in its livability rather than in its outer shell.



## The ranch house encourages outdoor living



16



17





Regardless of its location, the ranch house seldom forgets that there are days when the weather invites and forbids at the same time. Rooms similar to those illustrated here are the answer to where to go when the sun is too hot for comfort, or the breezes too cool.

When planning a covered porch or a terrace, remember that porches less than 8 feet wide are difficult to use as living-porches. Much of the livability of the screened porch illustrated here is due to the fact that it is 10 feet wide. A spacious porch can serve many purposes.

18







The livability of any outdoor room depends upon its privacy. The high walls of the bedroom patios illustrated in photographs 20, 21 give these outdoor rooms the same feeling of privacy that shades give an indoor room. The

charm of the patio in the U-shaped plan (photograph 22) is in the views it gives from the house itself. Photograph 23 shows how exciting and attractive a screened porch can be. Note brick floor, natural redwood, skylights.

20



21





22



23





24

The difference between view windows in the ordinary sense and such areas of glass as illustrated here is that the view windows look out

upon the countryside, while the floor-to-ceiling windows invite the countryside into the house. (Photograph 24 is from house on page 52.)



25



## Ranch-house interiors should reflect the way you live

Ask some interior decorators what principle to follow in furnishing a ranch house, and they'll toss this cryptic bit of advice at you: "*Over-scale and under-furnish.*" Let's try to interpret that statement. If a chair or table is in normal relationship with you, it is in scale with you; a chair that fits you is in scale; a chair that fits you but looks too big for you is over-scaled.

To *over-scale* and *under-furnish* should result in a feeling of spaciousness and simplicity as in keeping with the ranch-house idea. The word "simplicity" can prompt a multitude of generalizations about the ranch house, but there are

not many other words that suggest the reason for the charm of successful interiors.

Simplicity and livability go hand in hand. Over-decorated and over-furnished rooms are confusing. They are most often unkind to the family and guests. They offer too much competition for attention. Rooms should be backgrounds for people and never appear completely furnished until people are living in them.

That ranch houses don't need special furniture is proved again and again in photographs in this book. You can furnish the ranch house according to the way you want to live.







27



28





29

Proof that there is no set style for furnishing a ranch house is illustrated again in these four photographs. Just as the rooms vary from wood and plaster to cement blocks, the appointments vary from the very plain to the sophisticated. Photograph 27 is from house featured on page 100. Photograph 28 shows living room of a ranch house in the city. Photographs 29 and 30 are of living room and bedroom in ranch house of cement blocks.



30





Divisions between kitchen and dining room and living room tend to become less severe as homeowners decide that they are going to get along without servants. In the ranch house, the kitchen has always been an important room, and it seems logical to find it opening up into

the dining or living room. Kitchen range top in photograph 33 is custom built. Standard heating units and deep-well cooker are set in tiles. Corner of this stove can be seen at right of entrance to kitchen in photograph 34. Photographs 31, 32 are views of same room.

31



32





33



34









Here, in photograph 35, the kitchen is actually a part of the living room. In 36 and 37 you see the combination kitchen and dining room indicated in the house plan on page 43. This type of combination room divides but does not separate the two rooms and, as a result, the hostess can be part of the social group even while she is in the kitchen. The fireplace in the dining room, the informal furnishings, the natural wood finish in the kitchen keep the two rooms in harmony. In photograph 37 you are looking away from the kitchen through dining room into sun room.











Any living pattern fits into a ranch house. Of course, if your house must take care of a number of people who track dirt from the garden and stables into the living room, a white carpet is hardly the practical thing. Two of these photographs show an extreme contrast in ranch-house interiors. Photograph 39 is the interior of a ranch house in the city. The

opposite photograph is of a ranch house in the country. The owners of the latter use this house as a summer and week-end house, and therefore like to have it in contrast to their city home and its formalities. The dining room in photograph 38, directly connected with the bar and equipped with barbecue, is the high spot in the house for entertaining.



## More space through covered passageways

The idea that a roof alone will give livability to the area it covers has been labeled as a "mild climate" idea so many times that those who can use it most pass it by. Whenever it rains in warm weather, whenever the direct rays of the sun are too hot, the covered porch or covered passageway will increase the number of hours

you can be out-of-doors in comfort. The value of the covered area, whether for protection of outdoor living or service or circulation, is not confined to California. In any section, in both summer and winter, the protection of a roof alone can be used to increase the livability of the home.







42



43





44



45





The covered passageways in photographs 44 and 45 are of the same house. The open doors at left in the lower photograph can be seen at right in upper photograph. When doors are closed, the room is protected from wind, sun, and rain.

46

Passageway between a garage and kitchen (in photograph 46) is walled on one side. Porch in photograph 47 serves as hallway connecting the rooms of the house. With terrace, house, and porch at same level, living flows smoothly.



47





48

Here's a covered passageway between garage and house. In studying it from every possible angle, several points are developed: The entrance to the house comes into view after you

drive through the house; it allows car parking inside the lot, which gives the guest a sense of seclusion and a feeling of change from ordinary city atmosphere.



49





50



51









The covered passageway can become a living room (photographs 52, 53), or an entrance into a motor court (photograph 54), or a connecting covered walk between buildings (again, photograph 54). As a glass-enclosed room between kitchen and bedrooms, it reaches great

possibilities. It almost doubles the living area of the house at less cost than if the area were of standard house construction. The room thus created, being without definition as to use, would serve a variety of functions. Photographs show simplest of passageway constructions.

54



## When there are horses



Stables and barns seem to stay in style much longer than do most houses. The reason is that the stable builder thinks about what horses need before he decides how the structure will look. Barn in photograph 58, on an old California rancho, is built of stone and adobe. Built on a hillside, it has two levels inside which facilitate the handling of hay and grain. Photograph 57 shows small stable, tack room, storage combination. Arizona barn in photograph 56 shows that local building fads have very little effect on barns.

55



56





57



58





59 Water towers and tack rooms, windmills and covered passageways belong in ranch-house photographs. Stables in photograph 62 are located on a city ranch and are actually an extension of the garage. The covered passageway



60 divides the stable area and the motor court. Stable and caretaker's quarters in photograph 63 are in the best Monterey tradition — as natural as the Monterey pines towering above and more attractive than many houses.









## Board and batten

Many of the early houses were of single-wall construction. The vertical board siding kept out the elements and supported and braced the structure. To form a close joint with rough lumber or lumber that shrank and expanded was impossible. What could be a better solution than to nail a narrow board (a batten) over the joint? Probably few of the early



builders cared much about the pattern of light and shade resulting from the uneven wall surface, but architects continue to use the board and batten even in well-insulated homes.

Note the pattern on the wall in photograph 66. The vine has been carefully pruned to keep it light and airy so that its form would complement that of the wall rather than cover it.







## “Direct, honest solutions”

The three houses featured in the following pages cannot be omitted from any book on Western ranch houses. They are the work of Architect William Wilson Wurster. These houses are the result of owners' requirements and the fact that Architect Wurster liked “to work on direct, honest solutions, avoiding exotic materials, using indigenous things so that there is no affectation and the best is obtained for the money.” In this first house, the gallery serves the same purpose as the old *corredor*. Every room can be entered from the gallery except the two main bedrooms. The enclosed porch looking out upon the game area can be used as a dining room. The placement of the guest rooms some distance from the house is appreciated by all. The redwood rounds are from trees in the locality of the house.







68



69





The plan shows what is really two houses. Living room and guest rooms are in one, bedrooms in the other. The two sections are connected with a covered passage (in center of photograph 70). The fact that all doors open directly on the ground level increases the indoor-out-

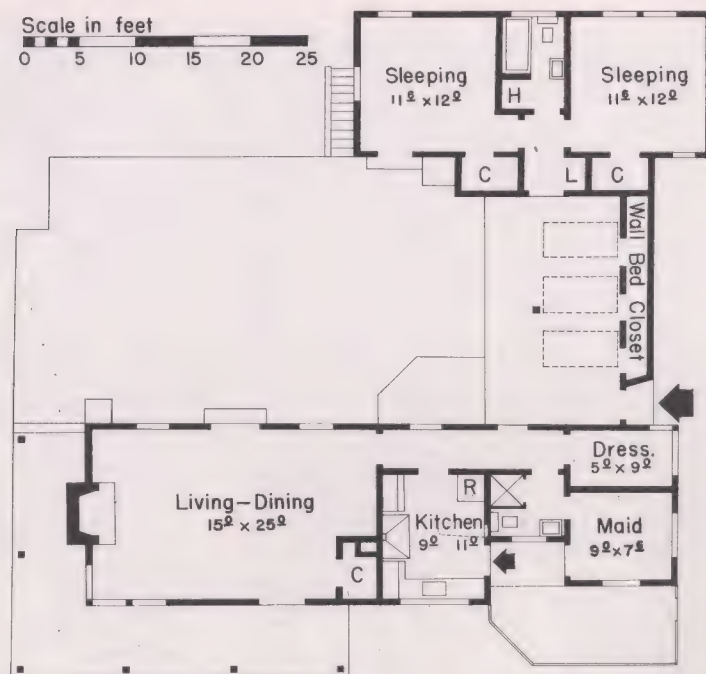
door feel of the house. Open-air living is emphasized by sleeping porches, terraces, and court. Owners' sleeping porch can be seen in photograph 71. The entire house is an excellent example of the fine quality of design that can be achieved by use of the simplest materials.











It is interesting to note that in the plan, the size of the terrace and the covered porch is indicated. Anyone who has lived in a ranch house knows that just as much attention should be paid to outdoor planning as to the house itself. The covered porch (photograph 75) is actually a guest room. It is equipped with three beds that fold back into a bed closet. Plan and photograph explain the method of construction. To keep the beds warm and dry, the closet is electrically heated.

The covered porch adds many hours to the livability of the outdoor area. Sun or shade can be selected as mood and temperature dictate. There is great charm without ornamentation. The exterior and interior are finished in vertical and horizontal boards, painted a weathered white.





74

75





## A study in ranch-house livability

Here, the designer had to meet the problem of providing a house wherein two generations could live and entertain without strain.

One solution is the spacious loggia. This glassed-in, cheerful room is both a dining room and a second living room. In practice, it takes care of most of the activities of the day in a very pleasant manner. When the younger members of the family or the adult members entertain large gatherings, the regular living room can serve as a music room while the loggia takes care of the conversation-minded.

(For a family without children and without need to mix the formal and informal in its living pattern, this loggia could satisfactorily serve as the one and only living room.)

Another solution is the bedroom-living room. The wing widens and the roof line changes to

provide a bedroom alcove for the master bedroom. The result is a most livable living-room-study-bedroom combination. Friends in for an evening of bridge can be entertained here. The room encourages reading. View at right below shows end of bed in alcove, and corner fireplace seen at left. See plan following page.

Off the bedroom and extending its livable space both actually and optically is a private patio. The walls of the patio are seven feet high and insure complete privacy. Such private patios are especially useful where adults and children are involved.

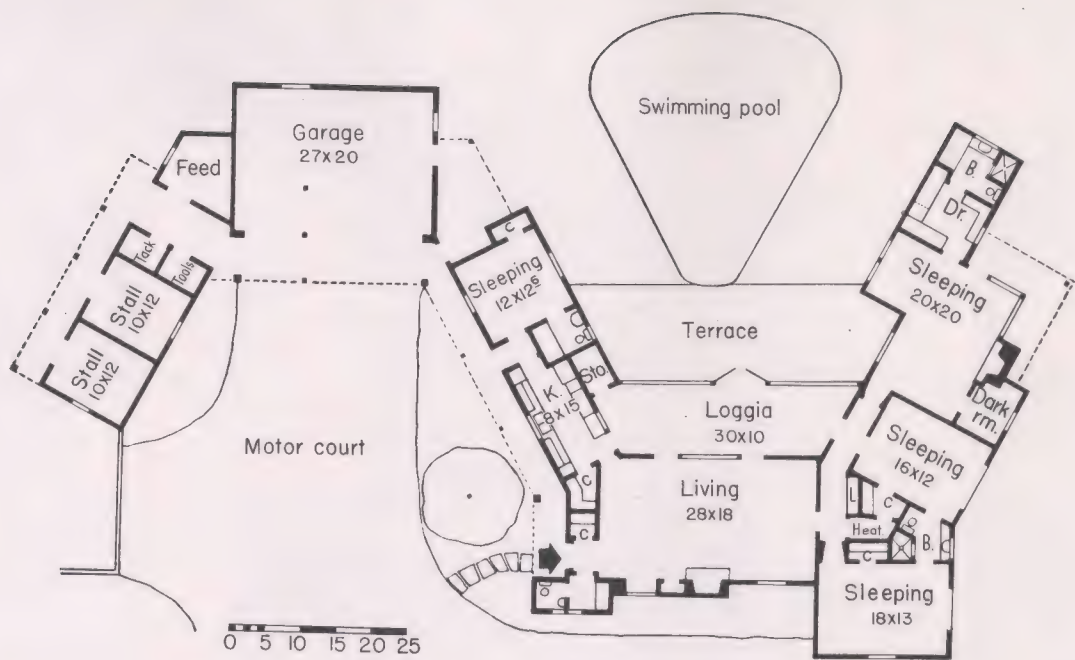
Undoubtedly, equally good solutions to living problems can be worked out in almost any type of home. But certainly the ease with which a complexity of problems can be solved in the Western ranch house form accounts for its continued robust life and popularity.















80



81



# Possibilities of the ranch house

Will the new materials, new techniques in lighting and heating, need for greater flexibility in the use of space, the increasing use of glass, and other technological advancements bring about radical changes in the ranch house? Will the development of new machines within the ranch house give it a machine-like atmosphere?

The best answers to such questions are in the preceding pages of this book. Ranch houses have been able to absorb everything our machines have produced without losing character.

Whenever the creation of a house was approached with simple directness, without striving for effect, either to prove its historical past or to demonstrate the creative imagination of the designer, the result is a livable house, without a date line.

Another answer to the future direction of the ranch house can be found in the home featured in the following pages.

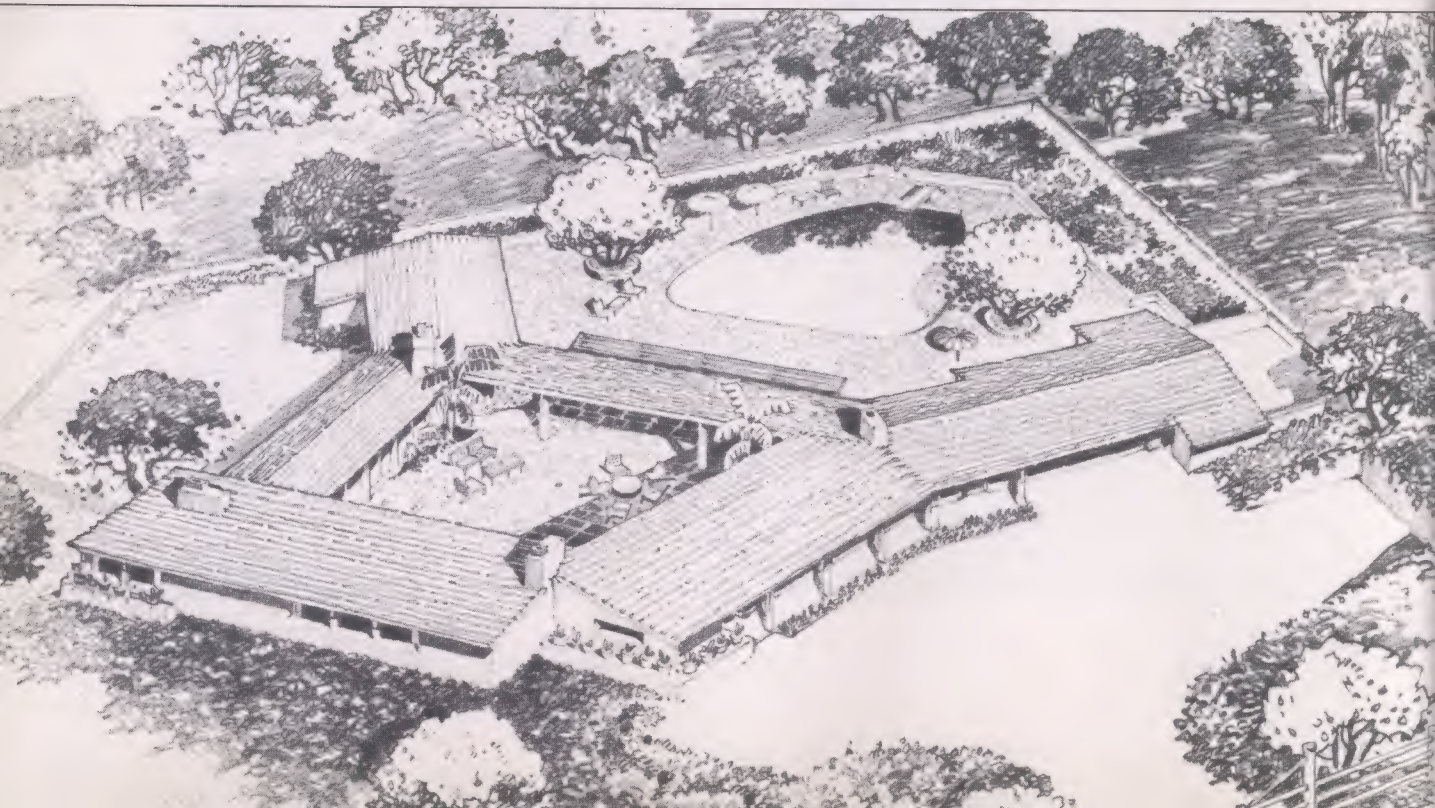
In this house, designer Cliff May brings his ranch-house thinking up to date. In this project, his background serves him well. His personal

heritage is rooted deep in California history. The *rancho* is no trick word in his vocabulary. The names of the Spanish dons are alive in his mother's memory. To visit her home is to step back through the years into the pleasant, gracious ways of Spanish California.

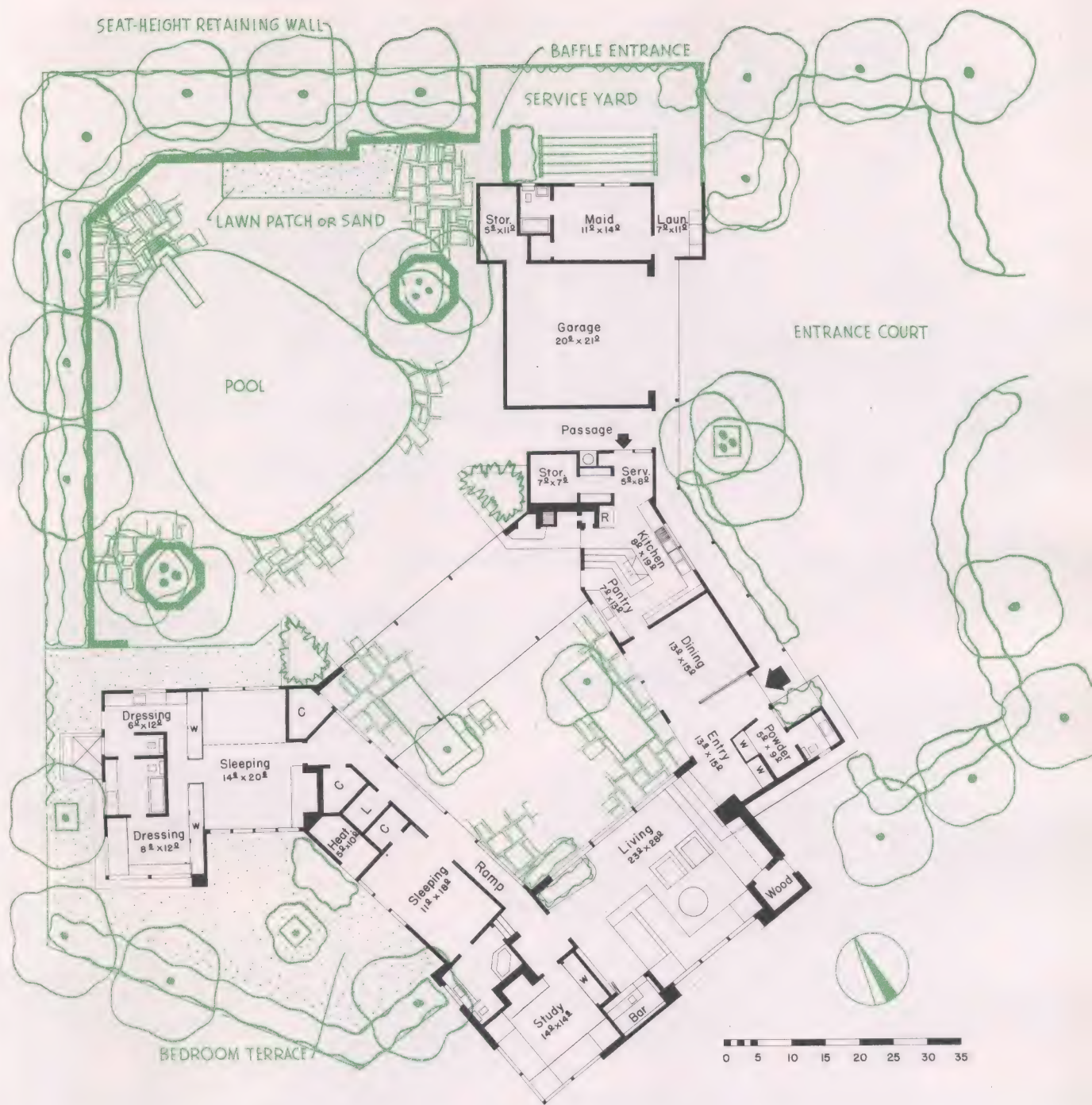
Cliff May has been able to see the ranch house as an idea in a way of living and therefore has felt no need to preserve its little surface labels. Respectful of the reasons for the old forms rather than the forms themselves, sensitive to the desires of people who seek ranch-house living, he has been quick to change whenever new materials or new construction methods suggested a better way of living.

This model house, therefore, is more than the usual sample house. It is the expression of a man deeply interested in exploring the full possibilities of ranch-house living. To check the plan and visit the house through a few illustrations will give you many ideas for your own home.

The house is to be built in a narrow valley. The view from the house is to the hills above it.







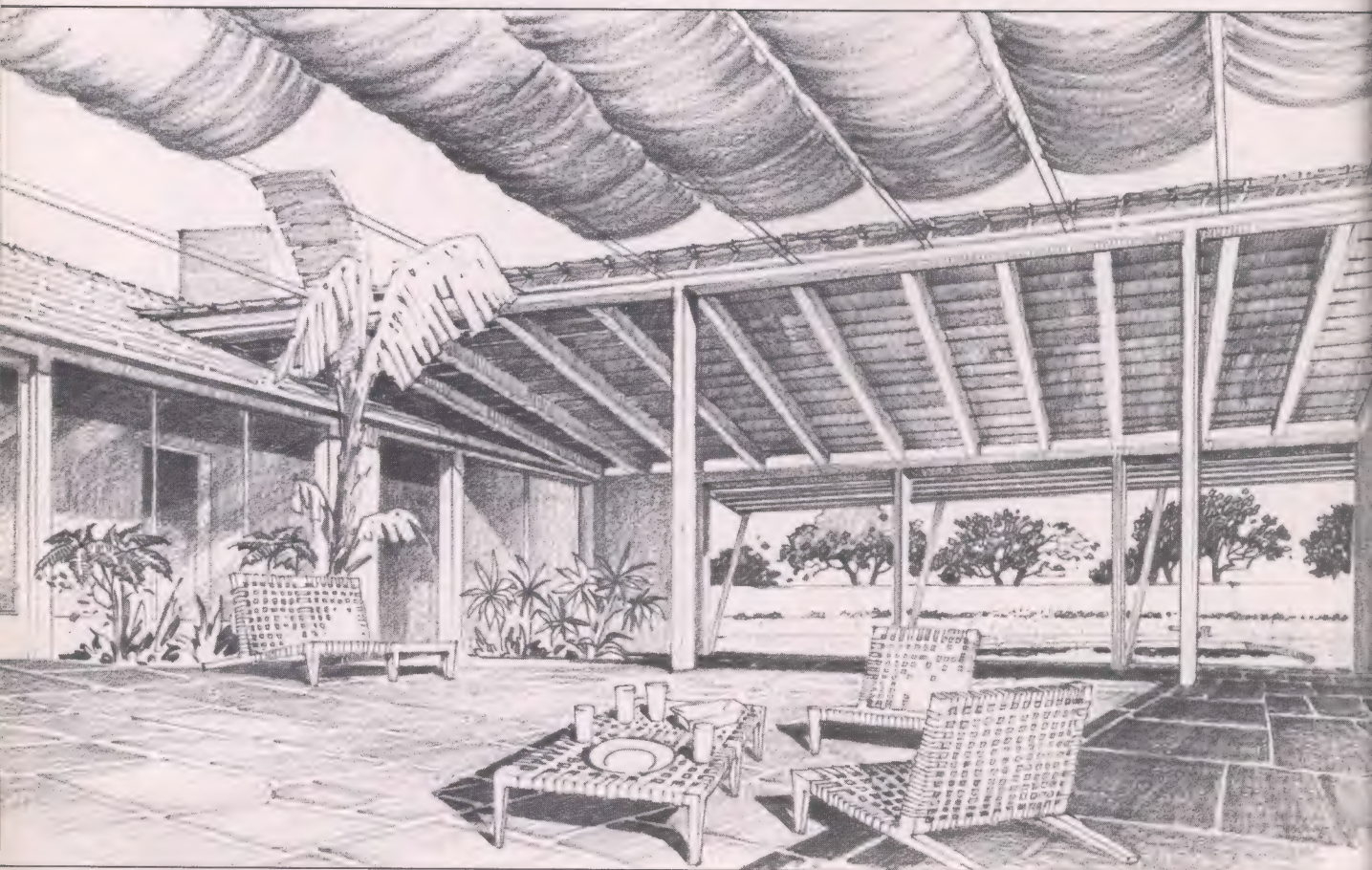
The entire unit is self-contained; all activities take place in and immediately around the house. The outdoor areas are so intimately joined with the house that they must be considered as extensions of the rooms of the house.

The patio, 28 by 36 feet, must be considered as

a room of the house. The covered porch, or loggia, 16 by 39 feet, takes care of outdoor living on occasions when the patio is inadequate.

Note how the site has been divided to take care of the various needs of the family. Motor court provides ample room for guest parking. Service

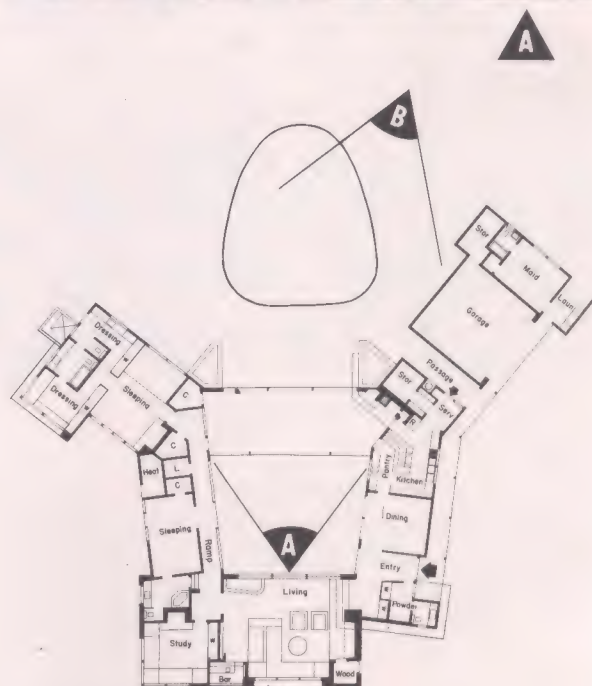




area is hidden. Barbecue and fireplace, adjacent to the kitchen, are so placed that they do not intrude on view from living room, and form an almost private alcove. The bedroom area is private and quiet. The active play area can be a part of, or separated from, the house. The house is oriented to take care of a warm summer sun and to capture winter sun under the porch.

## Outdoor Living

The combination of sun-shaded patio and porch brings unusual improvements in outdoor living facilities. During the day, the sun-shade filters the sunshine, and the porch offers shade. A walk through the patio, with its plant pockets, the friendly wings of the house at either side, the sky blue of the pool seen through the porch, is an experience you will want to repeat.





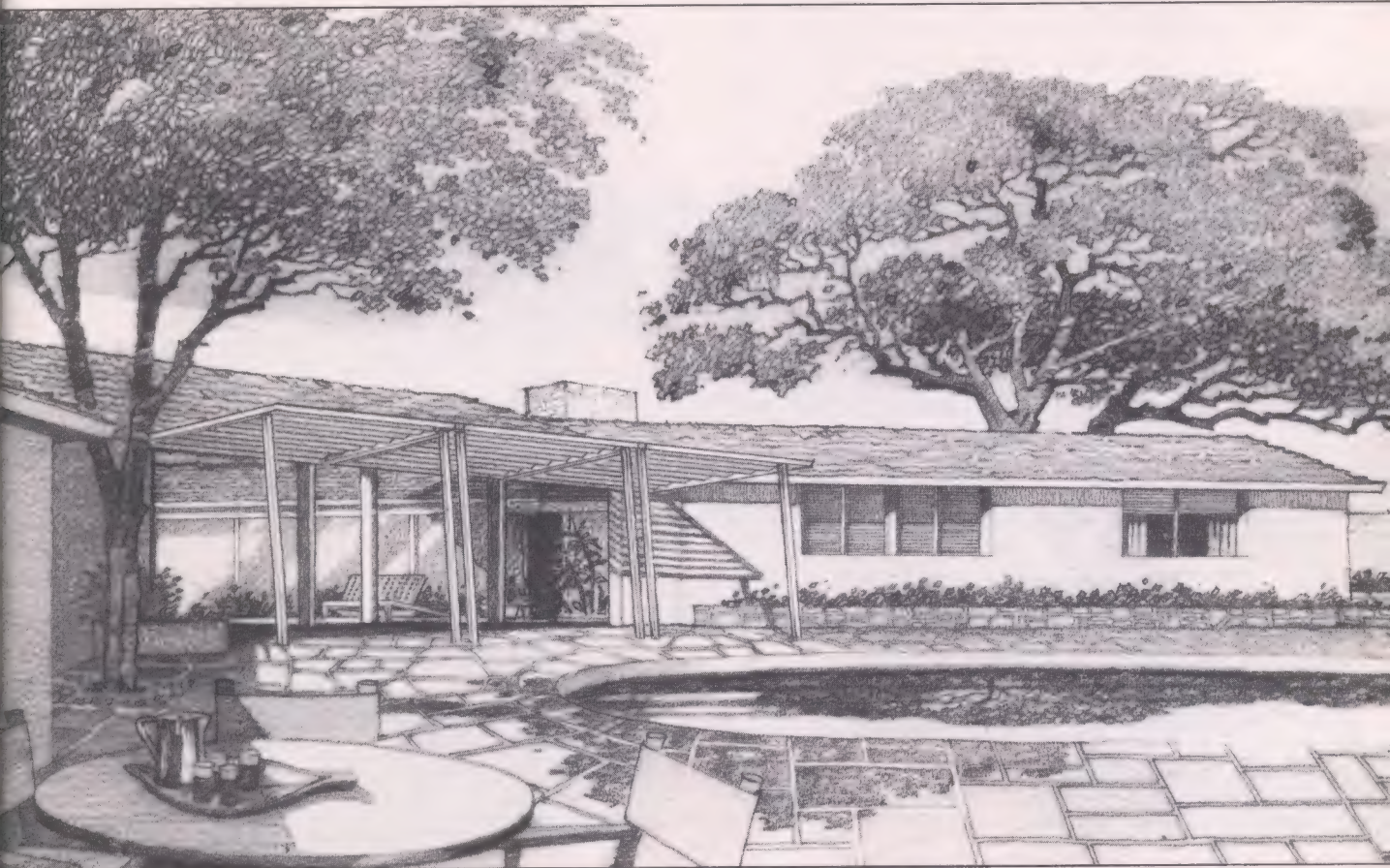
And then visit this house in the cool of the evening. The sun-shade, lighted by concealed outdoor lights, reflects a soft light throughout the patio; a fire is blazing away in the fireplace in the corner of the porch. If there is a breeze, you pull down the hinged-at-the-top louvers and close out the night. The porch is now a part of the patio, and you are in a warm, cozy alcove.

The louvers perform another function. The swimming pool is too strong an attraction to be in use or not in use with the click of a switch. It's unfair to the children to deny them the use of the pool "when company comes." If you are a good neighbor, you will not want to deny your neighbors the use of the pool, except at designated hours. Life is best where living is free and easy, but good living also needs privacy. And that's where the louvers go to work. Any time you feel that the patio should be shut

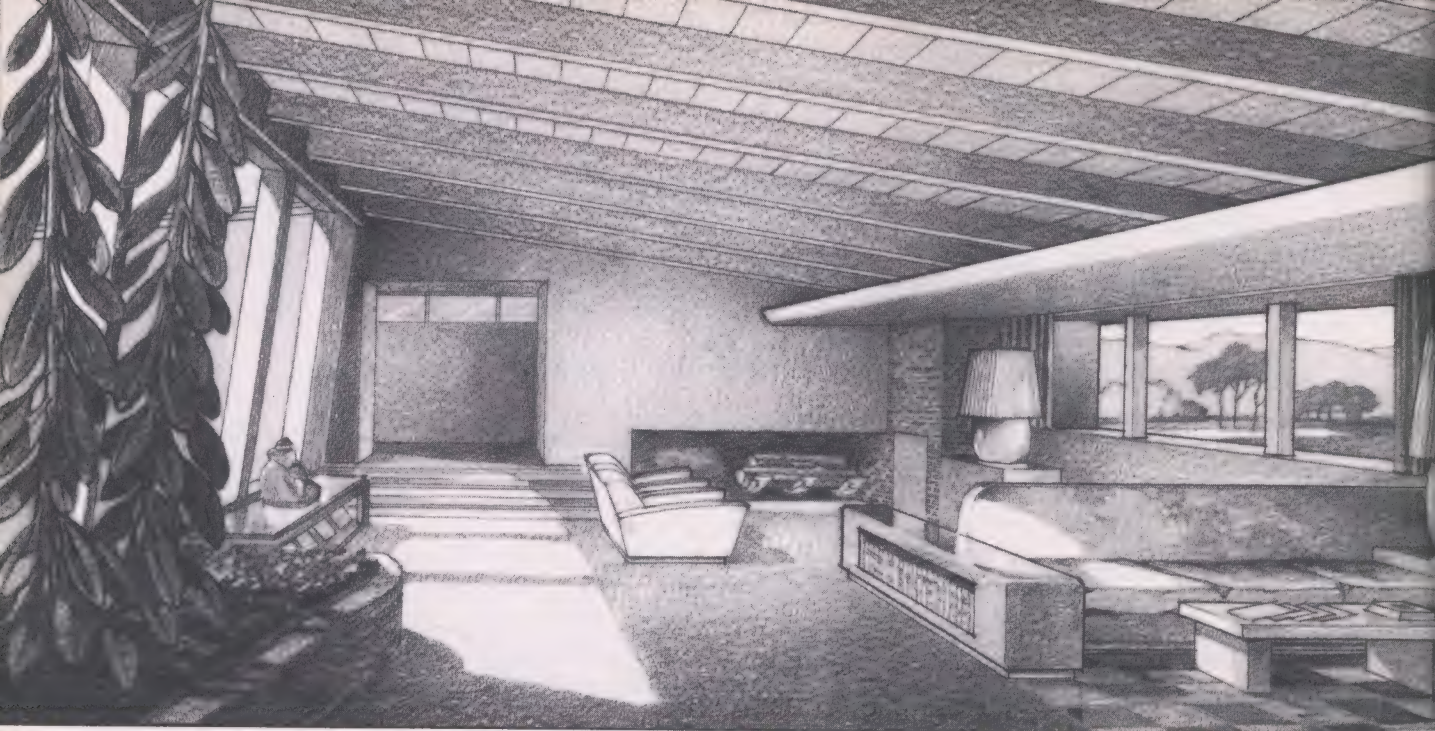
off from the rest of the world for the sake of privacy or because of the weather, just lower the louvers.

## Circulation

Movement about the house has been given careful consideration. Entrance to the house from the garage is under cover. Access to the patio is possible without disturbing any room in the house. The porch provides a convenient passageway between the sleeping and service areas and relieves the living room of cross traffic. The use of a portion of the living room as a hallway, cited as bad planning by many an expert, is not a serious objection here. The passageway through the room does not interfere with any functions of the room.







## Living Room

To test the validity of theories based on years of observation of living-room livability, Cliff May has taken several liberties with conventional ranch-house design in this demonstration ranch house. Here, he has depressed the floor of the living room 18 inches below the level of the rest of the house and the patio. When seated in the room, you look into the patio over the top of the furniture in the room, rather than around it. The usual ease of access through ground-level doors is lacking. Since several other entrances into the patio have been provided, there are no restrictions on patio living. The livability of the big living room is enough in itself, without the need for glass doors to lead you out into more attractive areas.

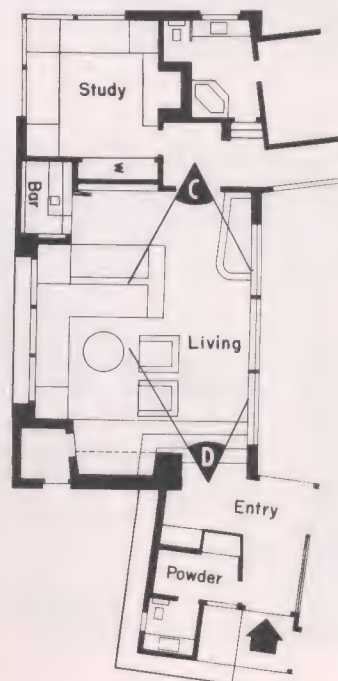
This living-room arrangement recognizes that the average family would like to implement many patterns of living in one house. Living should be formal or informal as occasion dictates. Outdoor living should be there to accept or reject. Since the patio-porch combination satisfies all types of outdoor living, the distinct separation of the living room from the patio, except optically, is an advantage. The living room is in direct contrast to the patio and therefore offers a complete change in atmosphere and mood.

If the house were smaller and the patio less a

part of the house, a more open arrangement between the living room and the out-of-doors would be advisable.

### *Living-Room Windows*

The shed roof over the living room permits a high ceiling without changing the close-to-the-ground feel of the exterior. It also allows an unrestricted view, through an 11-foot-high window, of the hilltops beyond and above the house. The combination of shed and gable roofs





in one ranch house is not uncommon. The shed roof is advisable where low eaves or porch lines would tend to chop off the upper half of a view.

Because of its unusualness, the wall off-the-vertical may annoy the eye at first glance, but the enhanced view gives its use ample justification.

#### *Living-Room Furniture*

The living room you furnish may not look like this, but the reasons behind the design of this room are founded in the success and failure of hundreds of homeowners.

The heavy scale of the furniture is in accord with the size of the room and, for that matter, with the ranch house.

The furniture is built in. It was decided that furniture was just as much a part of the room as the walls and fireplace, so the furniture was frozen to the best possible arrangement.

The placement of the furniture divides the room according to use. A back-to-back davenport outlines the game-library alcove. This area has a cork floor. The three-leaf accordion door that hides the bar can be folded back to cover the books. When so arranged, the inside, cork-

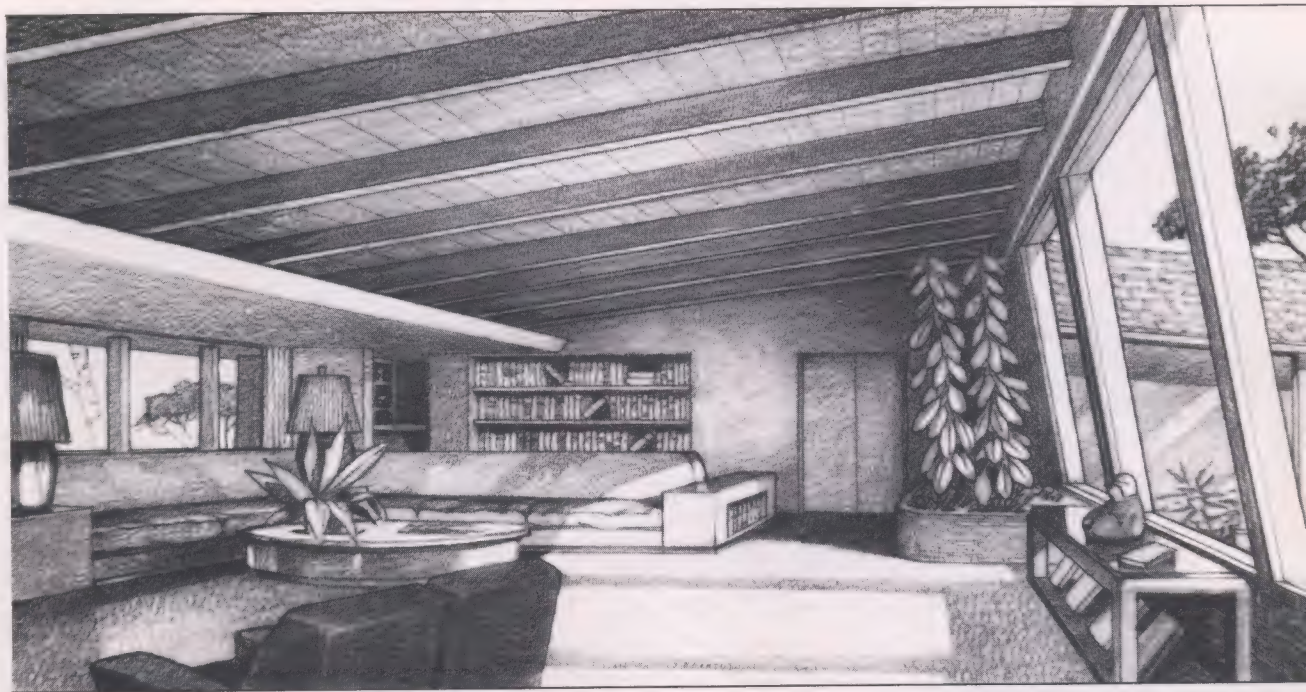
covered surface of the doors is exposed, and dart games can be played.

#### *Orientation*

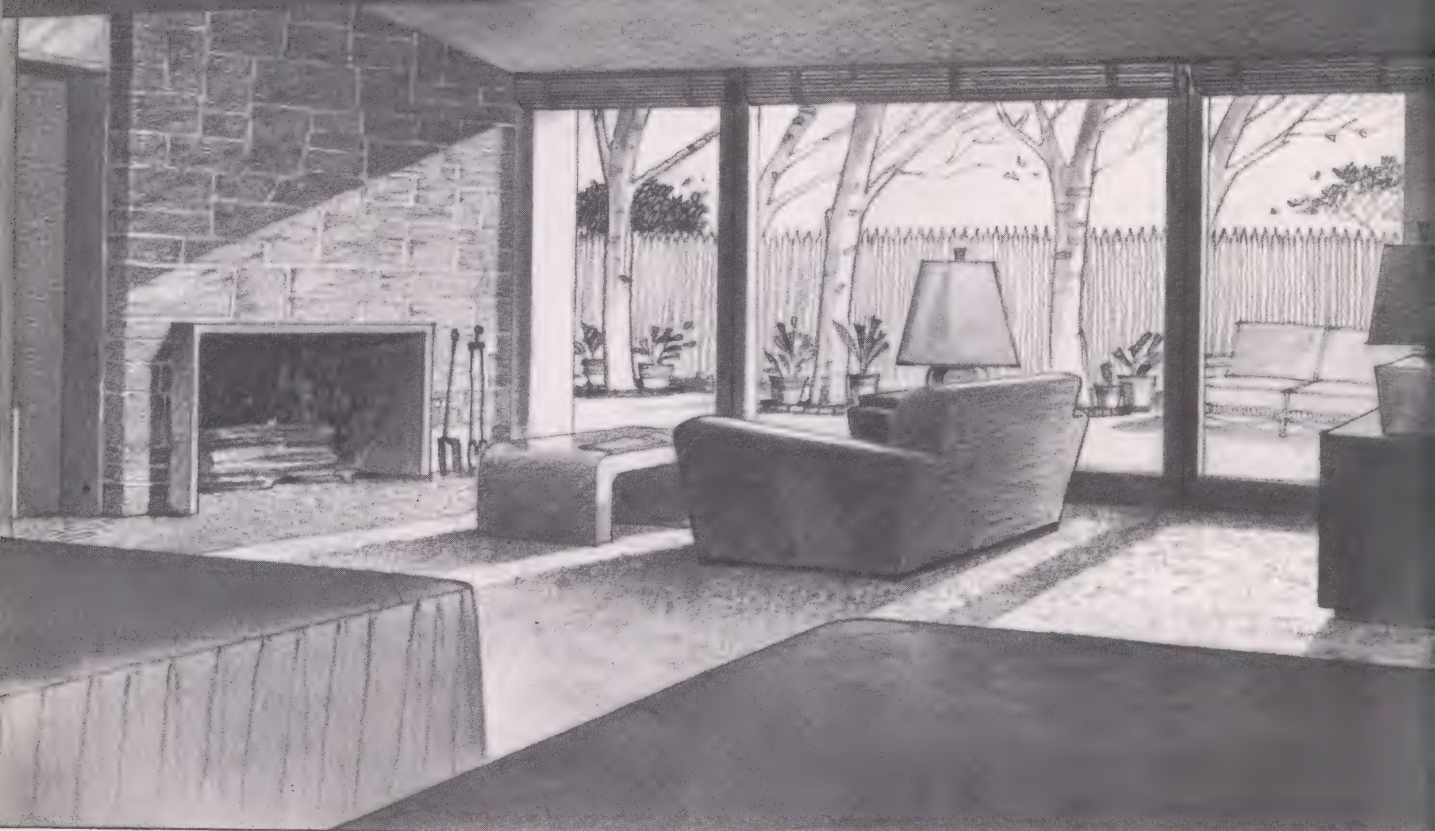
The usual orientation of the living room is reversed. The glass wall is to the north. The view dictated this reversal. In the colder climates, this amount of glass on the north side might increase heating costs. However, the Southern California climate permits its use here; especially with other adequate windows in the southern wall of the room.

### Radiant Heat

The entire house and patio is built upon a concrete slab in which have been embedded, indoors and out, pipes carrying hot water. The floor is warmed to a temperature of 85 degrees. This method of heating, called panel (or radiant) heating, has one advantage that makes its use outdoors unusually attractive. It provides the type of heat that maintains comfort even when air temperatures drop several degrees below the accepted 70 degrees. The outdoor porch and patio will be comfortable — as long as the wind is under control—on evenings when the air temperature is around 60 degrees.





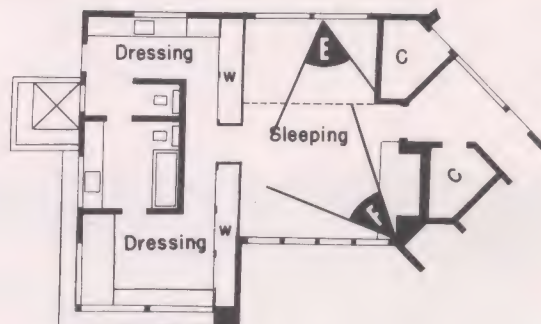


## Bedroom

This unit probably would be better described by the label "owners' apartment." (See plan.) In fact, if a family of two converted just the bedroom wing of this house into a complete unit by changing the smaller bedroom into a kitchen, they would find comfortable living.

The placement of the beds in an alcove allows the room to be used as a second living room. (Note that space is allowed for twin *double* beds.) When the children take over the living room and patio, this room really comes into its own. The private bedroom patio adds to the seclusion of the room and gives it a feeling of great spaciousness. The high patio walls give privacy that makes possible the free use of glass.

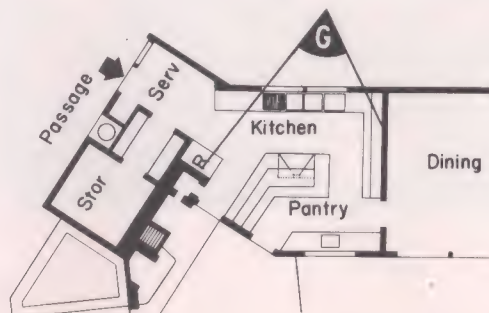
A tribute to the climate of Southern California is the outdoor shower. Between the bathroom and a small shower-garden, surrounded by an 8-foot wall, is a full glass shower door. The small garden is filled with tropical growth—a banana tree, ferns, exotic vines. When you step into it and turn on the shower, you are in a warm rain in the jungle.



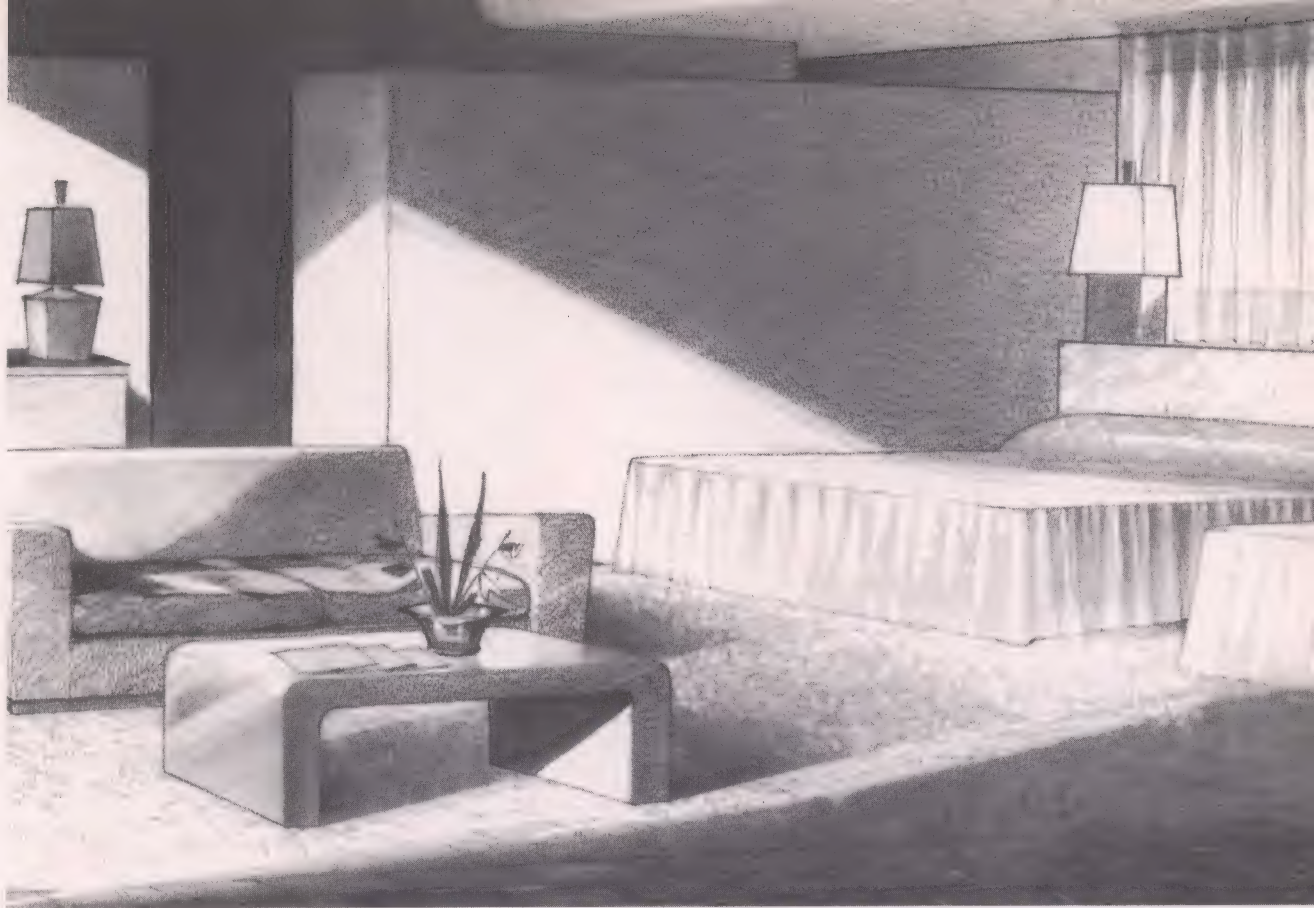
## Kitchen

The kitchen includes, in addition to the latest innovations in appliances, notable changes in arrangement. The stove is centrally situated and is provided with a large exhaust fan hidden in the cabinet 14 inches above the stove.

The division of the kitchen by the stove and





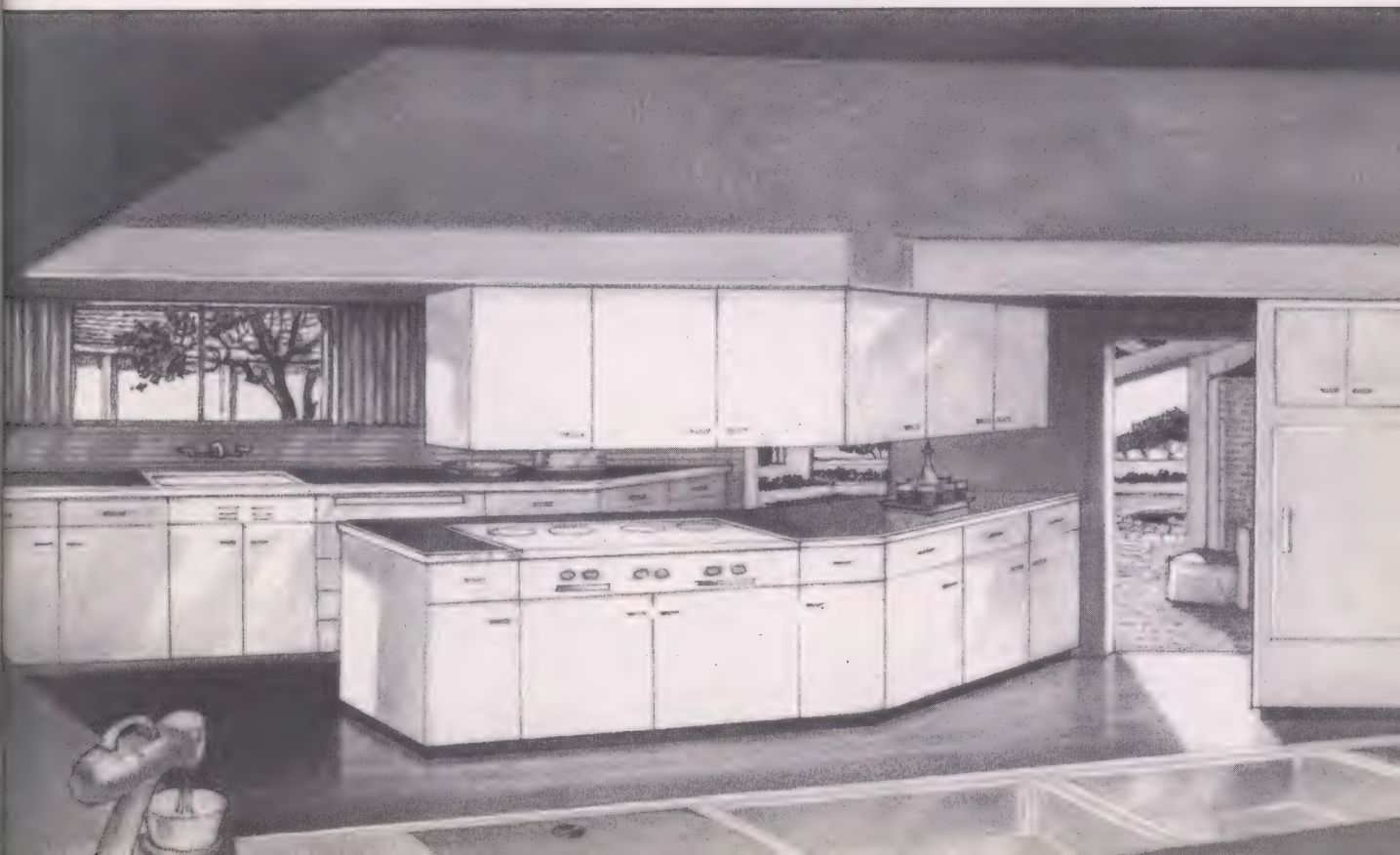


cabinets almost doubles the storage space possible in a kitchen with wall storage only.

The two entrances allow the two normal functions of the kitchen to take place simultaneously

without interference. Glasses and trays can go in and out of the kitchen, to and from pool, patio, or porch without disrupting normal kitchen procedures.

F



G



## Barbecue

The barbecue, with its automatic spit, the grill, and gas-heated plate, work as a part of the kitchen. They are in line of vision of the cook at the kitchen range. The cooking of the meats, which normally smokes up a kitchen regardless of the size of fan, will be done on the barbecue. Incinerator is part of the barbecue and is reached from inside the kitchen.

## Lighting

Thoroughly planned lighting, both of the inside and of the garden areas, will dramatize parts of the house and its furnishings, as well as furnish adequate illumination. The inner patio, for example, will have recessed ground lights

focused upward to illuminate the foliage of trees and plants, and to cast shadows on a translucent fabric patio cover. In daylight, the fabric would diffuse the direct sun's rays; at night, it would reflect the artificial lighting back upon the patio's occupants with a soft, tinted glow. Light of the patio and house will be balanced so that no reflections will appear in the glass separating the two—thus lessening the effect of separation between indoors and outdoors.

In the house itself, concealed ceiling fixtures, containing focussing lenses, will direct carefully aimed spots or diffused patches of light to high-light table settings and individual flower arrangements, or to give subtle luminosity to some favorite, large painting.

All of these dramatic lighting effects, however, will not obtrude upon the more normal, general illumination furnished by lamps or concealed wall and ceiling fixtures.









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